

FUNDAMENTAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

Vol. IX, No. 1 - January 1957

EDITORIAL

A book is like a garden carried in the pocket—Arab proverb.

Readers of this bulletin, and those familiar through other sources with Unesco's programme, will be aware that over the past few years considerable activity, in the form of surveys, research and experiment, has been undertaken with the aim of improving methods of teaching adults to read and write, and of giving them opportunities to use these skills.

Since its inception a large part of this bulletin has been given over to making known various examples of such activity. The volume of research has greatly increased since 1952. In 1956 the Unesco Secretariat reported at length to the Committee on Information from Non-self-governing Territories of the United Nations on two important aspects of the subject—the eradication of illiteracy, and the production of reading materials for new literates. These two documents summed up all the information the Unesco Secretariat had accumulated up to the time of writing. The committee documents were, of course, given only restricted circulation,¹ and portions of these are presented here in a manner more fitting, it is hoped, for general publication.

In this issue, therefore, the entire contents of which are given over to the theme of literacy work, two articles take the form of summaries by the Unesco Secretariat of official reports, and many of the examples given are drawn from non-self-governing territories. These summaries, besides drawing on committee documents, also draw largely on two other Unesco publications, one already available and one in the press. *Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing (Monograph on Fundamental Education, X)* by William S. Gray, was published in 1956. *The Production of Reading Materials (Monograph on Fundamental Education, XII)* will be available in 1957. Readers are urged to consult these studies, copies of which can be obtained from Unesco sales agents listed on the back cover, or direct from Unesco.

The discerning reader will perceive at once how difficult is the task of summarizing a large number of reports from areas whose past histories and present conditions vary so widely. He will notice too how the attempt to extract generally valid conclusions from such a wide assortment of experience has led to innumerable qualifications of general propositions. In some cases a conflict of views has been left unresolved. An agency engaged in putting bookselling on an ordinary commercial basis is not likely to adopt

1. United Nations General Assembly, Committee on Information from Non-self-governing Territories, *Reading Material for New Literates* (An interim report by the Unesco Secretariat), New York, 1956, 34 pp., processed (A/AC.35/L.221, 9 March 1956).

United Nations General Assembly, Committee on Information from Non-self-governing Territories, *Report on the Eradication of Illiteracy* (Prepared by the Unesco Secretariat), New York, 1956, 39 pp., processed (A/AC.35/L.226, 29 March 1956).

the same criteria of success, nor to use the same methods to investigate the extent of success, as the educator or social administrator. Yet they are all of them contributing to the drive for increased literacy.

No attempt has been made in these pages to achieve a final reconciliation between such divergencies of approach. Such a reconciliation, even if it could be achieved, would not reflect reality. Each situation is *sui generis*. In recognition of this, the present issue contains three field reports from widely different territories, with all their local colour and individual detail.

One more item of interest calls for mention. The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of Pakistan, has recently agreed to reproduce material from this bulletin regularly in the monthly organ of the Village Aid Administration, *Pak Sarzamin*, in both Urdu and Bengali. The *Fundamental and Adult Education* bulletin, therefore, has now two headquarters editions and six regional editions. Negotiations for editions in other languages are proceeding.

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THE DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT OF LITERACY

It must be stated at once that despite great efforts and encouraging results on the part of national, regional and international authorities, the information available on literacy work among adults permits few conclusions of a universally valid nature to be stated with any confidence. Information is often incomplete, or unsuited to the drawing of comparisons. The variables—social, cultural, economic, ethnographical, geographic—are so numerous that it is possible to make valid statements only on a very narrow basis.

With these reservations, the following generalizations, based on a series of surveys and studies carried out by Unesco over recent years, are presented for consideration.

CRITERIA OF LITERACY

Up to the present, there has been no general agreement on a definition of 'literacy' or 'illiteracy' applicable to all countries and territories. Differences in the existing national criteria of literacy have been repeatedly indicated in the studies undertaken by the United Nations and Unesco.¹

The difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory common definition is due only partly to the divergence of national practices and traditions. A more fundamental cause is the difficulty of reconciling various concepts of literacy, ranging from the mere ability to recognize, and to reproduce in writing, certain words (or even letters of the alphabet—hence 'analphabetsm'), through the level of ability involved in communicating adequately with other persons by means of the written word, to the much higher level of competence necessary to understand, to appreciate, and even to produce, literary works.

Most of the national statistical data on literacy and illiteracy are derived from population censuses. The census enumerator, provided with a census schedule containing one or more questions, such as 'Can you read and write?' or 'Can you read?' and 'Can you write?', obtains an answer from the person enumerated (or from some other person answering on his behalf), and enters it on his record. It is hardly possible for the enumerator to test the validity of the answer by means of a detailed examination. Hence, in most census operations, the criterion of literacy adopted has to be more or less a minimum one.

On the other hand, a special survey (probably using a sampling method) on the literacy of a population could be based on an objective test, which would involve not only word recognition, but also comprehension of a sentence or passage, and the ability, not only to write from dictation, but also to compose a statement in answer to a question or to certain verbal instructions. In such cases, the criterion of literacy could be related to a so-called 'functional' level, or to a range of abilities from the minimum to a highly functional level.

The United Nations Population Commission, at its third session in May 1948, recommended that: 'Literacy be defined for purposes of international comparisons as ability both to read and to write a simple message in any one language.'²

1. See Unesco, *Progress of Literacy in Various Countries (Monographs on Fundamental Education, VI)*, Paris, 1953; United Nations Statistical Office, *Handbook of Population Census Methods (Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 5)*, New York 1954.

2. United Nations, Population Commission (third session, 1948), *Report*, Lake Success, 1948 (document E/805).

UNIVERSIDAD DE LA HABANA
FACULTAD DE EDUCACION
CATEDRA "B" METODOLOGIA PEDAGOGICA

Reporte de la M.

No.

Alumno investigador y practicante: Leonard Loret Elida Cornejo
Apellidos. Nombres.

Número de matrícula: E-1043
(Carnet del alumno).

Analígrafo: Rosabell Luis
Apellidos. Nombres.

Absoluto Por desuso Edad: 16 Sexo: M. F. Ocupación: Cortador de caña

Dirección: Colón 5 Jovellanos
(Calle) (No.) (Pueblo o Ciudad).

Ambiente social: X De posibilidad favorable media.

Técnica empleada: Método silábico Método de palabras. Método oracional.

Texto empleado o clase de material de lectura: Carillito de A. Echegoyen

Tiempo empleado en cada tarea: 45 minutos Número de tareas en cada semana: 5 L. Ma. Mi. J. V. S. D.

Tiempo empleado por el alumno en trabajo de ejercitación personal:

Resultados: Lectura, interpretación y reacción correctas. Lectura mecánica. Lectura silábica. Lectura Subsílabica. No aprendido a leer.

Test aplicado: Beta Resultado: Normal C. I.

OBSEVACIONES: Era analfabeto absoluto, ha aprendido a leer rápidamente; mediante el Método Ideofónico; le cuesta trabajo pronunciar la g delante ui y de ue.

Examinador: Dra. Gilda Carlota Novoa Pernas

Cargo: Prof. Grado IV C. P. Superior Lugar: Jovellanos

Dirección: Clemente Gómez 16 Jovellanos
(Calle) (No.) (Pueblo o Ciudad).

Práctica: Aplicación de técnicas del aprendizaje de la lectura para Adultos.

Revisado por: J. Martínez Anotado por: C. P. (Alumno del Equipo de Tabulación) Firma del Profesor.

A Cuban literacy survey form (the Cuban experiment is described in the article on page 32).

This definition, while undoubtedly suitable for census purposes, does not fully meet the needs of educational surveys.

A Committee of Experts on Standardization of Educational Statistics, convened by Unesco in November 1951, recommended the following definitions of 'literacy' and 'semi-literacy':

A person is considered *literate*, who can both read with understanding and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.

A person is considered *semi-literate*, who can read with understanding, but not write, a short simple statement on his everyday life.¹

The same report specified that:

To measure literacy as defined, the following principal methods of verification are recommended:

- (i) By complete enumeration in a general population census, either
 - asking a direct question on literacy; or
 - ascertaining literacy status by an indirect question on the number of successfully completed years of schooling.
- (ii) By sampling surveys, either
 - as in a complete enumeration, with a direct or indirect question; or
 - using a standardized test of literacy which may be developed by each country.
- (iii) By estimation, based on either
 - a school census; or
 - regular school statistics.

Until international recommendations of this nature are generally adopted by governments, statistical data collected and published by them will continue to be based upon different criteria. This fact limits the international comparability of statistics on illiteracy.

However, where national data are based on consistent criteria over a period of time, it is still possible to make a statistical analysis of the progress achieved within a country or territory in the reduction of the extent of illiteracy among its population. Furthermore, the extension of education in any country or territory will inevitably lead to the reduction and eventual elimination of illiteracy, however defined, except in those cases where population increases outstrip the expansion of education services.

On the basis of available national statistics relating to illiteracy and of other current educational statistics, the extent of illiteracy among the population 15 years old and over, may be estimated approximately as follows:² World total 42-44, Africa 77-81, North America 11-12, South America 40-42, Asia 60-64, Europe (including U.S.S.R.) 7-9, Oceania 12-13 per cent.

The rate of illiteracy in any given territory is obviously related inversely to the extension of school education among children of school-going ages. If all school-age children were enrolled in school, the illiteracy rate would eventually dwindle to an irreducible minimum, say 1 or 2 per cent of the total adult population. Unfortunately, ratios of total school enrolment to the size of the child population (the school enrolment ratio) are not generally available over a period of time. In areas where the school enrolment ratio is less than 10 (per 100 children 5-14 years of age), the adult illiteracy rate is generally 90 per cent or more. On the other hand, where the school enrolment ratio has reached 90 or more per 100 children, the adult illiteracy rate has been found to be generally not more than 10-15 per cent. In exceptional cases, where the school enrolment ratio reaches 100 or more (due to the enrolment of many pupils over the age of 14), the illiteracy rate for the population 15 years old and over may nevertheless be

1. Unesco, *Rapport du comité d'experts pour la normalisation des statistiques scolaires*, Paris, 1952 (document Unesco/ST/R.4 rev.).

2. Unesco, *Basic Facts and Figures*, 1956.

fairly high (say 20-25 per cent), since the wide extension of schooling may be of comparatively recent occurrence, not enough to overcome the deficiencies of the past.

It should be pointed out that both the estimated population of 5-14 years of age, and the estimated illiteracy rate 15 years old and over, may be subject to error due to lack of precise demographic data for certain territories. The total enrolment figures are always based on official figures, including both primary and secondary school enrolments. They may also be subject to error due to incomplete reporting.

However, it is in any case certain that the extension of school education, especially universal primary schooling, is one of the surest means to reduce illiteracy among the adult population.

THE MEASUREMENT OF LITERACY

Apart from the difficulties of statistical reporting noted above, it is clear that progress in the measurement of the incidence of illiteracy will be assisted by the more exact definition of literacy and by a study of methods of measurement which can assess status and progress in terms of the objective criteria used in the definition. A first step in the study of methods of measurement has been taken by Unesco, for whom Dr. Irving S. Lorge of Columbia University (U.S.A.) prepared in 1955 a preliminary report on the methodology of literacy testing. His report, based on recorded experiences of literacy testing in many countries, discusses the concept of literacy, its implications for literacy testing and the present status of methodology and practice in testing. The main lines of his discussion are paraphrased below.

It is logical to consider people illiterate only when they have absolutely no knowledge of any form of written expression. Above this level there is a continuous range of literacy up to the ability of the most highly educated individuals. It is the function of literacy testing to place each individual at some point within the range. It is then possible to state, for a community, the proportion of people above and below a fixed point. Such a point can be established as a standard for a particular purpose, and it then becomes the minimum score of a 'literate' person as defined for that purpose. It may be fixed by ability to read and/or write as measured by a standardized test; it may be the average reading and/or writing ability of children having completed a fixed number of grades of primary schooling and so on. Such a score and the relation of an individual's ability to that represented by the score can be established only by the use of objective tests. Subjective estimates, particularly if—as in many census surveys—they are made by the individual himself, can rarely measure accurately his relationship to a precise standard.

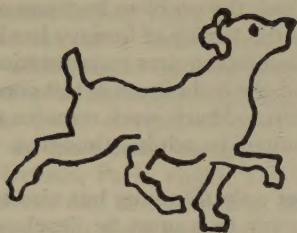
In highly literate societies the number of years of schooling can often be used to get a good approximation to a fixed point on the literacy scale. In such societies the proportion of the population of very low ability on the literacy scale is small, and it has been found desirable to introduce a standard of literacy somewhat higher than simple literacy. The term *functional literacy* has become commonly accepted. It is variously defined but for present purposes it can be accepted as that level of literacy which is sufficient to allow the individual, if necessary on his own, to extend his range of knowledge.

Functional literacy in this sense cannot be a single fixed point for a whole community, but has a different value for each type of knowledge to be acquired. It also varies with the kind of literature available.

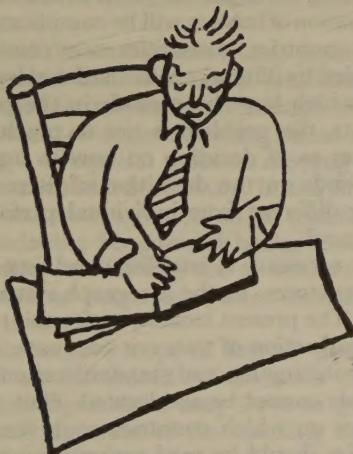
Dr. Lorge suggests that testing programmes should tentatively aim at assessing the literacy of individuals with respect to three fixed points in the continuous literacy scale. The first (simple literacy) level would be the ability to read single words or a very few words as they appear in signs; understanding would be shown by behaviour. The next level would require a larger recognition vocabulary and ability to interpret longer messages. The third, broader, level would demand a reading ability somewhat higher again, and also ability to write.

An exact definition of literacy calls for decision on such questions as to whether or

store work money go



store
family
dog
dish
egg



working on his car
eating his dinner
writing in his book
cleaning the house
washing the clothes

Examples of three types of test used for measuring the beginner's ability to read. Test 1: Recognizing a word pronounced by the teacher. Test 2: Recognizing the word that tells what the picture shows. Test 3: Recognizing the phrase that tells what the picture shows. (Reproduced from *Reading Placement*, Project for literacy education under sponsorship of the Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, Washington, D.C., Educator's Washington Dispatch, 1949.)

not a desirable standard of 'literacy' requires understanding as well as ability to read words, whether or not reading or writing ability should be related to oral expression, at what level each of these skills should be required, and so on. Such standards must be established before a test can be constructed or its results evaluated. These criteria will depend on the educational, social or political use to be made of the results of the tests, and will in many cases be the responsibility of official authorities.

When the standards have been established, the problem becomes one of testing against the standards. Much of the experience in the testing of literacy has been in reading and writing tests for children. The testing of adults requires consideration of adult problems and needs, although the methodology and the techniques of test construction can follow closely those already established for children. Much work remains to be done in determining the methods of appraisal best suited to adults, though a number of possible alternatives are already known.

The content of tests must be suited not only to adults but also to the culture of the community. In other words, special literacy tests must be developed for each culture in which they are to be used. One cannot expect good results from using tests translated from other languages, as this introduces linguistic and cultural problems. In countries with more than one current language it seems that separate standards of literacy will have to be established in each language. Parallel tests in a number of languages may be possible, but a satisfactory method of establishing them has not yet been found. In nations which require bilingual education, the estimation of literacy will be complicated, and in many other countries, particularly immigrant countries, authorities must consider the implication of literacy in one language accompanied by illiteracy in the national language.

From the attempts at adult literacy testing which have been made in the past it is clear that, in developing objective literacy tests, the problem is not so much one of possibly finding new procedures and techniques as of deciding on how to apply the techniques currently in use. This in turn depends on the definition of literacy; e.g. since self-reporting censuses measure something different from individual performance tests, how far can each be said to measure literacy?

For some languages, linguistic research will be necessary to establish word lists, semantic frequencies and the frequency of sentence-structures. In the ideograph systems (e.g. Chinese) even more basic work may be needed. The present techniques for this research and for the application of the results in the construction of tests are adequate, but the research, the establishment of criteria, and the construction and standardization of tests is a long and expensive programme and probably cannot be accelerated. Pilot projects in selected areas might well provide experience on which countries could base their individual programmes. In such projects samples should be used rather than a census of the whole population.

In considering the adult problem, the question arises what group of the population should be chosen for a report on total literacy. Practice varies. Some countries report literacy in the population over 5 years of age, some over 10 years. Lorge suggests that it would be wise to report literacy over 18 years of age—the age of adulthood. No country has compulsory schooling beyond that age and few students of primary schools in any country are older than 18 years.

TEACHING ADULTS TO READ AND WRITE

Many of our readers will be aware of the *Preliminary Survey of Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing* issued in July 1953 by Unesco. On the basis of this survey, intensive research was carried out for a further year to obtain information relating to basic facts and principles which could be used as guides everywhere in organizing literacy campaigns for children or adults and in selecting methods of teaching reading and writing.

The results of four years of research have been published in *Methods of Teaching Reading and Writing: an International Survey*, by William S. Gray (*Monographs on Fundamental Education*, X, Unesco, Paris, 1956). This is summarized below, with the caution that summary statements can be misleading. Readers are referred to the volume itself for the full conclusions with their necessary qualifications.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE GRAY REPORT

The promotion of literacy is not an end in itself. It is rather an integral part of a broad attack on all the conditions that are detrimental to individual welfare and retard group progress.

As one of the vital factors in this process, fundamental education seeks to help people to understand their immediate problems and to provide them with the attitudes and skills needed for solving them through their own efforts. In carrying out these purposes, every means of communicating ideas and all available aids to learning are used. Reading is of especial value in meeting the practical needs of daily life, in improving health and standards of living, in acquiring a growing sense of citizenship and willingness to work for the good of all, in widening the individual's understanding of the world and broadening his cultural background.

If reading and writing are to achieve these broad purposes, minimum standards of literacy are no longer adequate; instead, teaching must be continued until functional literacy is attained.

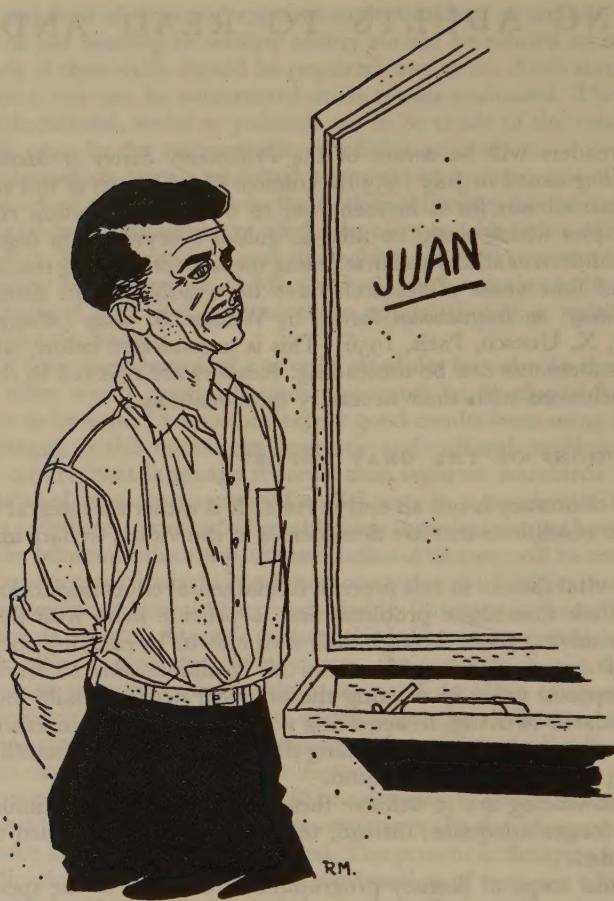
The nature and scope of literacy programmes and many of the specific ends to be achieved are influenced by the needs and conditions prevailing in specific areas.

Two main principles may serve as guides in planning literacy teaching. First, the nature and duration of the teaching should be adapted to the needs of the specific group served. Second, the reading and writing activities provided should be based on the immediate interests, motives and purposes of those taught.

The nature of the teaching given is further influenced by the form and structure of the language involved. Fortunately, however, the reading act as such is the same in most, if not all, languages. For example, all good readers read with their minds intent on meaning. As they do so, their eyes move along the lines in a series of short alternate movements and pauses. As a rule, they recognize words as wholes, usually in units of two or more.

The basic attitudes and skills involved in reading are the same in all languages. They may be classified under four heads: the accurate perception of words, a clear grasp of the meaning of what is read, thoughtful reaction to the ideas acquired, and their use or application. This provides a common framework, or set of objectives, within which many of the problems faced in promoting world literacy can be discussed.

The methods of teaching reading which have been used in the past vary both in their nature and in the assumptions that underlie them. The earliest methods concentrated at the beginning on the elements of words, letters of syllables, on the assumption that a mastery of them was an essential aid to word recognition. These methods were followed in turn by others which made use from the beginning of whole words and larger



A leer, Juan.

A leer su nombre.

Sí, a leer su nombre.

The third page of the primer A la escuela used by the Puerto Rico Superior Educational Council for their adult literacy project. The first and second pages have already introduced all the words used here except the preposition A meaning to.

units. The words thus learned were sooner or later broken down into their elements and used as aids to word recognition. The assumption was that the meaning of what is read should be stressed from the beginning, and that this approach to word mastery harmonizes closely with the way in which children and adults learn in general. Recent trends have been eclectic in character, incorporating into a single system many elements of earlier teaching procedures of established worth. They are also 'learner-centred', since learning is more rapid and effective when the materials used are based on the learner's immediate interests and felt needs and the methods adapted to his level of maturity and unique characteristics.

A study of the results of research into methods of teaching reading led to four significant conclusions:

1. A given method does not always produce equally good results wherever it is used. This implies that there are other factors, such as the efficiency of the teacher and the capacity of the learner, that influence progress.
2. Different methods produce different attitudes and skills. For example, primary emphasis on the elements of words promotes skill in word recognition; emphasis on whole words or sense units develops a concern for the content of what is read.
3. The use of different methods starts pupils on different roads towards ability to read. To ensure efficient reading, all aspects of reading must sooner or later be cultivated.
4. Best results are secured, as a rule, when both a clear grasp of meaning and accuracy in word recognition are stressed from the beginning.

The chief trends in the teaching of handwriting have been similar to those in reading. As a result, initial writing activities in the case of both children and adults start with the writing of whole words, supplemented by training in specific elements where needed. The use of simplified forms of writing is preferred during the early stages. From the beginning, instruction in handwriting parallels that of reading. Although the materials used in teaching handwriting are based far less than formerly on the contents of primers, handwriting is used as soon as possible as an aid in mastering word recognition and spelling.

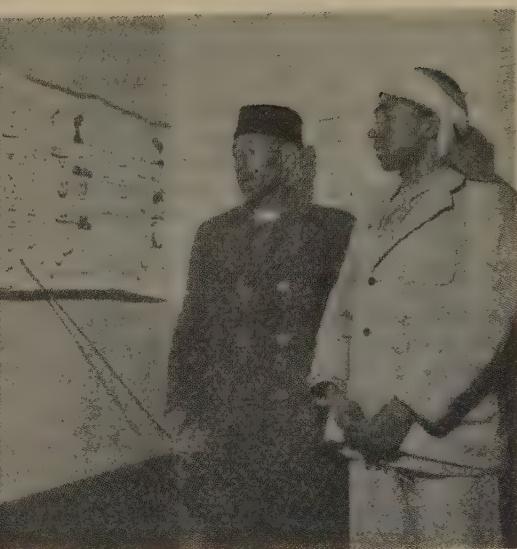
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Whenever programmes for teaching reading and writing programmes are to be carried out, some form of overall planning, guidance and administration is clearly necessary, providing for both servicing and administrative agencies. In every area where such agencies do not at present exist, it is recommended that education authorities should work towards their establishment. In this regard provision should generally be made for the intensive initial study of conditions and needs within the area; the development of a plan to ensure the elimination by stages of illiteracy throughout the area within a given period of time; the creation of agencies for the development of teaching programmes; the production of instructional and follow-up materials; the training of teachers; the supervision of instruction; the carrying on of necessary field research and experiments; and the continual evaluation and improvement of the programme.

The work of such agencies will be greatly assisted by the co-operation of vigorous local committees, to ensure a genuine basis of community participation, help in adjusting the programme to local needs and give any necessary administrative assistance.

After the initial community studies have been made, the literacy plan developed and the administrative pattern created, it is recommended that a literacy guide containing a clear statement of the major aspects of the programme and the steps essential to its implementation should be published as a basis for public discussion, newspaper publicity and conferences.

At an early stage in the planning of a literacy programme it is necessary to make provision for the preparation of special teaching materials or the adaptation of materials from other areas to local conditions. In drawing up plans for the production of such



(Photo United Nations)

There is no one fixed method of teaching reading. Some methods are based on the association of the shape of the letter with that of a familiar object (Literacy class in Hubibia Licee in Kabul, Afghanistan).

material, authorities are urged to provide, wherever possible, for supplementary material such as word cards, work books, filmstrips, games, tests, experience charts and teachers' manuals or guides, as well as the usual primers and basic readers. It is also essential that at an early stage plans should be made for provision of suitable follow-up reading material, adapted to the interests and abilities of newly literate people. Literacy without literature is a contradiction in terms, and literacy campaigns will generally fail in their objectives if provision is not made for using the skills developed during the campaign.

The key to success of any teaching programme is the teacher himself, and all efforts should be made to give training to student teachers or other voluntary literate members of the community who may be enrolled as teachers. Such training should include not only the use of teaching methods, but also give an insight into the nature of, and the differences between, working with adults and working with children; a broad understanding of the aims of literacy teaching and familiarity with the materials used in these programmes; the use of literacy in personal and community development; motivation for learning; and special techniques to be employed in overcoming individual difficulties in learning to read and write.

A carefully planned programme of literacy will also provide for periodic evaluation of progress and diagnosis of weaknesses in the teaching or in the administration of the programme, so that the necessary corrective steps may be taken.

FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED

The recommendations made in the Gray report, although drawing on the experience of educators in many areas of the world, are, by the nature of the evidence available, tentative in many of their aspects. Further research is needed, particularly with adult students. In many parts of the world a clearer understanding is necessary of the current status of literacy and the factors which influence, encourage or retard it. Research is also required into problems arising from the language of instruction in some particular areas, the development of appropriate orthographies or of simplified styles of writing, and into linguistic analysis of language and the development of area or regional languages. More study is also needed to provide a clearer understanding of the physical

and psychological processes involved in reading and writing, particularly among adults. The demand for more and better literacy materials is widespread. There is room for further research on methods of developing vocabulary control for different levels of literacy, on the interests of newly literate adults and the type of reading material preferred, on the most suitable agencies for the production of this, and on effective methods for its distribution and use. Finally the various methods of teaching reading and writing to adults require further comparative study.

The report summarized above has been published in English and French and will soon be available also in a Spanish edition to administrators and educators working in the field of fundamental education. During 1956 Unesco has employed two experts in Latin America and in the Arab States of the Middle East to begin some of the work of research suggested in this report. They have been attached to the Latin-American Regional Fundamental Education Centre (CREFAL), Patzcuaro, Mexico, and the Arab States Fundamental Education Centre (ASFEC), Sirs-el-Layyan, Egypt. They are to assist in the development of literacy tests, teaching materials, teachers' manuals and guides, and in the training of teachers and the improvement of current methods. In 1956 Unesco gave special attention to problems of the production of reading materials for new literates. Of special importance was the regional seminar for South Asia which met in Murree, West Pakistan: representatives and experts from the area considered regional requirements in respect of such literature, and framed recommendations for the guidance of the Secretariat with regard to future action.¹

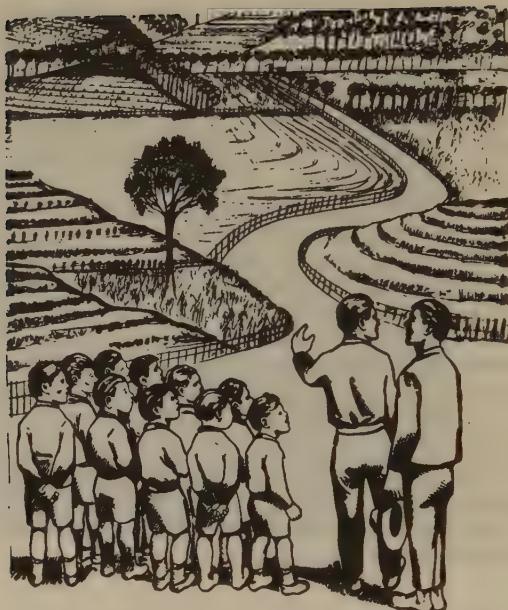
READING MATERIAL FOR NEW LITERATES

THE PROBLEM

Experience in many countries shows that literacy campaigns have often failed because of a lack of reading materials to carry the new literate from the literacy class to the stage where he can read fluently for profit or pleasure. The adult who has successfully passed through a literacy course is usually equipped with only the most rudimentary skill in word recognition and if, as is so often the case, the only literature available to him is far more advanced than anything he has so far tackled, it is hardly surprising that he should rapidly lose not only his interest in reading but also the ability he has acquired with so much energy and enthusiasm. The same phenomenon occurs among school-leavers who emerge into a society where there is nothing to read at a suitable level, or at any rate nothing of sufficient interest to develop and maintain the reading habit. If learning to read with ease and understanding is a long process, it is equally true that the practice of reading for information or entertainment is hardly to be acquired in the course of a few years of schooling, still less in a few months of adult literacy classes.

The term 'new literate' should not be interpreted too narrowly. It is the word 'new' which can be particularly misleading. The most useful definition of the term would cover any adult or adolescent who has at some period acquired the basic technique of reading, but has not yet developed his skill to the point where he can read with speed, fluency and complete understanding. He may have acquired the basic technique

1. Unesco report ED/146, Paris, 31 July 1956.



El maestro me mostró
la finca de Tomás.
El terreno inclinado
lo tenía sembrado con árboles.
El terreno plano
lo tenía sembrado con maíz.
Donde la capa de tierra era delgada
había pasto.
Así aprendí que no todas las tierras
sirven para sembrar las mismas plantas.

EL MAESTRO ME MOSTRÓ LA FINCA DE TOMÁS

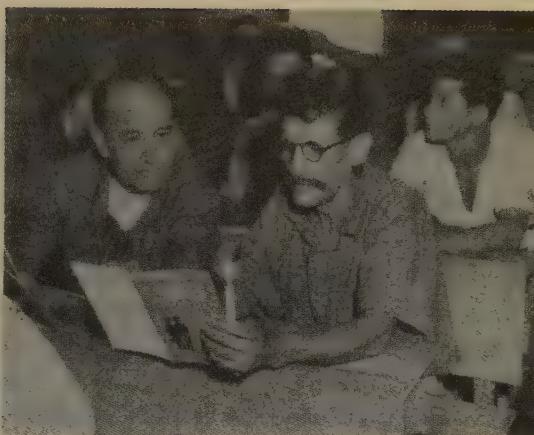
Two pages from the reader Defiende tu suelo, published by the Latin American Fundamental Education Press.

many years ago, or he may have graduated last month from a literacy class. In either case, his reading ability is still limited. Obviously, there are varying degrees of imperfection and inexperience, so that among the readers who can all be properly regarded as new literates, a wide range of achievement can be found.

The new literate, as thus defined, requires material that will serve two functions, equally important. In the first place, it must give him reading practice, develop his mechanical familiarity with the printed page, help him to increase his reading vocabulary and his speed and fluency. In the second place, it must satisfy the end, as well as improve the means, of reading. The new literate, however limited his technique may be, requires material which provides instruction or entertainment. If the reading habit is to be established, it is essential that this literature have an intrinsic value. At the literacy-teaching stage, incentive is easily provided by the teacher and by the stimulating atmosphere of the educational campaign; at the post-literacy stage, any motivation for continued effort must be supplied by the reading materials themselves. If the new literate finds reading profitable and enjoyable he will want to read more. If not, he will soon feel that he has already wasted too much time in acquiring a useless technique.

If material for new literates succeeds both in building up a permanent reading habit and in improving reading skill, it should lead naturally on to more advanced literature, if this exists in the language concerned. As has already been indicated, however, there are many instances where such a literature is scarce or unavailable. In these cases, there is no question of bridging a gap: the gap is virtually limitless and what is

Reading materials are more likely to interest the adult reader if they are related to his daily problems. Specialists observe reactions in the field to the texts they provide.



(Photo Pan American Union)

needed is not only the highly simplified material suited to the needs of the adult with limited reading ability, but a whole range of reading matter at all levels of difficulty. In such cases follow-up literature does not correspond to a temporary stage in the reader's development, but may represent the only source of reading matter available to the general public.

There are many difficulties in catering for such needs. The first group of difficulties is largely economic. Publishing firms are not normally to be found in areas where the reading habit is not widespread, and where the economic status of the new reading public is too low to justify book or periodical production for profit. In languages where the literate public is small, editions of books and periodicals may not exceed a few thousand copies, and cheap mass production is therefore impossible. Limited editions are also called for even in languages spoken and read by millions, since the new literate requires reading matter closely related to his environment and occupational interests. Some kind of regional production may provide an answer to certain cases, but a great deal of care must be taken.¹ The technique of cheap production and the organization of the potential market are essential in solving the economic aspect of the problem.

There are, however, further educational, sociological and linguistic difficulties raised by the very special needs of the new literate. A recognition of the importance of vocabulary and style and the needs of new literates in a given society, the control of vocabulary and style to correspond with their level of education, the study of linguistic forms and usage, all these are vital to the production of suitable material and cannot be achieved by the staff of a normal publishing or newspaper firm.

LITERATURE-PRODUCING AGENCIES

For these reasons, the production of reading matter for new literates has usually depended on some kind of government support, which may take one of three main forms. In many cases a government ministry or department operates its own publishing programme, usually in connexion with a national or local educational campaign. A frequent feature of this kind of operation is the free distribution of the material produced; the materials themselves are usually educational or informative, rather than recreational, in character. In certain instances, as for example in the Brazilian rural

1. For example material which is theoretically suitable for all the Spanish-speaking countries may in fact be suitable for none. Variations in usage occur between one country and another, not to mention social, cultural and occupational differences.

education campaign, the production of reading materials is the concern, not of one, but of many government departments—education, agriculture, health, child-care, social welfare, etc.

Government support may also take the form of financial assistance to a semi-autonomous literature-producing agency. Such agencies as the Burma Translation Society, the Gold Coast Vernacular Literature Bureau and most of the other African Literature Bureaux, were established with the aid of an initial capital grant from the government and are supported by recurrent grants and loans.

Thirdly, financial aid may be given by a government to a private institution, such as the Jamia Millia Islamia in India, or to an agency which develops into an independent self-supporting body. An example of the latter is the Gaskiya Corporation, which was set up in 1946 with the aid of a long-term loan by the Nigerian Government, but which is now operating independently of government assistance or control.

So far, we have mentioned only cases of national support. The problem of literature-production is, however, also being attacked at the regional level. Intergovernmental organizations, such as the Organization of American States and the South Pacific Commission, have set up agencies for producing materials for the new literates of Latin America and the islands of the South Pacific.

There are also instances, at both the national and international level, of private bodies, such as the Summer School of Linguistics and the International African Institute, which are carrying out a vital task of linguistic, sociological and educational research. It is certain, however, that if the largely theoretical work of these institutes is to find a practical application in literature-production programmes, then these programmes will require the financial backing of the national government desiring them.

Exceptions to the above general rules are possible, especially in the case of periodical production. A significant example of private enterprise in this field can be found in the Bantu Press (Pty) Ltd. of Southern Africa, an independent newspaper publishing firm with headquarters in Johannesburg. This organization has sprung from the *Bantu World*,¹ a newspaper founded in 1932. Today, Bantu Press Group publications serve the Union of South Africa, Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Southern Rhodesia and Swaziland and make up 95 per cent of the vernacular press in these regions. Through the central organization, newsprint and machinery are pooled and an efficient advertising campaign has been built up.

The extent of support required by a literature-producing agency will depend very largely on its functions. For example, the agency may well produce materials other than reading matter for new literates, and some of these may, by their nature, lessen rather than increase the financial burden. A newspaper with its own sources of advertising revenue may, and ideally should, become self-supporting. The production of school textbooks, with their assured market, may contribute towards the cost of less profitable production. It is in fact the production of vernacular newspapers and school textbooks which has enabled the Gaskiya Corporation, while also producing material for new literates, to achieve its status of financial independence. At the same time, a number of agencies provide services which cannot show any financial profit. They may provide a research and information service, as in the case of the South Pacific Commission Literature Bureau; a library service, as in the case of the East African Literature Bureau; or, like the Burma Translation Society, they may run adult education courses and popular cultural activities.

1. The *Bantu World* was the first informative newspaper specially serving the African population of the Union of South Africa to break away from the tribal approach which had characterized earlier papers. This was achieved by using several vernaculars in addition to English. Although multilingualism is a serious problem in newspaper publishing, it was clear, in fact, that new literates did not want their own languages to be excluded from the newspaper's columns.

It is possible to classify literature agencies, not only by the type and the extent of public support they receive, but by the function they serve in the field of literature production. Two distinct types emerge from this sort of classification. The first type of agency arranges for the publication of material which it does not itself produce. Its function is to locate and select manuscripts, edit them in suitable form, subsidize the cost of their publication by an established publisher, and arrange for their distribution and sales. Such an agency does not usually exercise a strong editorial control over the manuscripts it receives and is generally less concerned with the reading difficulties of the new literate than with the building up of a supply of good general reading matter by native authors and the development of a regular reading public. If the task of organizing the market is successfully achieved, the agency should ultimately be self-liquidating. An example of this type of agency is the Joint Publications Bureau of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia.

The second type of agency prints and publishes its own material. It usually has a clearly defined publication programme, and its materials are either written by the editorial staff or commissioned from outside sources in accordance with this programme. Normally the material is carefully edited with regard to vocabulary control and style, and illustrations and presentation are closely adapted to the needs of new literates. A typical example of this kind of agency is the Gold Coast Vernacular Literature Bureau. An agency which has most of the characteristics of the first type, but which also possesses its own publishing house, is the East African Literature Bureau.

Awareness of the problem of literature-production is comparatively recent. Certainly most of the practical steps which have been taken to deal with it post-date any large-scale attempts to combat illiteracy. Most of the main literature-producing agencies have been set up in the course of the last 10 years, and many have only just begun operations. If the experience that has been gained in this field is still fresh, it is none the less limited, and what little has been achieved is not yet widely known. The next section may be helpful in isolating some of the main problems involved and showing how these are being dealt with.

CHOICE OF MEDIUM

Periodicals for new literates do not in essence differ from standard commercial press publication, except in so far as their readers have a limited reading ability, are usually not politically mature, and have a limited *per capita* purchasing power. These periodicals must therefore be easy to understand; they must serve as a forum for the new literates' opinions while remaining independent of any political party—it being usually impossible to operate them without at least a small subvention.

They form an essential part of any well-balanced literature programme for the following reasons. They can build up suspense interest and thereby help to develop regular reading habits as can no other type of literature. Their content, which is of direct and perhaps vital interest at the time they appear, can be related much more immediately to the everyday life, interests and needs of readers than that of pamphlets or books can. By continually bringing current problems of the area which they serve to the public attention, they can contribute powerfully to their solution. They can pave the way for the development of regular commercial press enterprises by helping new literates to participate in the life of their community, until they are ready to join the ranks of regular newspaper readers.¹

Simplified periodicals for adults are almost without exception weeklies, fortnightlies or monthlies. This is not only the result of the technical and financial difficulties of

1. See United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Freedom of Information—Encouragement and Development of Independent Domestic Information Enterprises*, 14 January 1954 (doc. E/2534).

publishing a daily,¹ but also because most new literates, particularly those in rural areas, would probably find it difficult to digest every day so great a volume of reading material.

In publications for new literates the difference in content between normal newspapers and magazines tends to be much less acute. In the first place, the proportion of features to news is usually greater in a newspaper for new literates than in a normal newspaper, thus bringing it close to a magazine. In the second place, since new literates often have at their disposal either a newspaper or a magazine, most magazines tend to publish some news items as well, and thus take on some of the characteristics of a newspaper.

It is, of course, sometimes possible to produce successfully a whole series of periodicals, both newspapers and magazines, even in a region where there is a problem of multilingualism. The experience of the North Regional Literature Agency, Zaria, Northern Nigeria, may be mentioned in this respect. In the area served by the Agency, literacy instruction is given with the help of a primer written in the local language of conversation. Towards the end of the six-month course other study books are used, including one on the use of figures, and one on how to write letters. Sometimes the course includes a special book to act as a bridge between the local language of conversation and the major lingua franca of the area. Periodical reading sheets are then made available to new literates, and at a later stage a monthly magazine is issued in both English and Hausa.²

ASCERTAINING READERS' INTERESTS

It is generally accepted that any successful publication programme must be based on a knowledge of what the reading public wants and needs. Since in a programme for new literates, needs as well as interests have to be determined, interest surveys should ideally cover not only the new literates themselves, but also teachers, schoolchildren, and educated persons in the community. The commercial book and newspaper publisher operates on the trial-and-error basis of finding out what sells well, and many of the agencies producing material for new literates follow the same method—while of course not neglecting the general purposes for which they are providing literature. In recent years, however, certain agencies have been trying to ascertain readers' interests more scientifically. For example, in 1953, the Gold Coast Vernacular Literature Bureau prepared a questionnaire and undertook a detailed readership survey³ which has proved of great help in determining the editorial policy of the Bureau.

The questionnaire covered a whole range of subjects besides reading preferences. Respondents were asked whether they had any difficulty in obtaining the Bureau's publications, and if so, what kind of difficulty; whether they found the books too expensive; whether they would buy larger books at a higher price, if available. They were also asked about physical reading conditions (time of day, lighting, whether any strain or fatigue was experienced, etc.).

A final question was devoted to motives for reading. Information about actual reading preferences was elicited in three ways. One question asked what subjects the respondent would like to read about, another asked him to name five subjects which he thought people in his locality would benefit from reading about; thirdly, there

1. The only daily newspaper known to the Secretariat of Unesco as making special provision for newly literate adults is *Gwoye Ryhhaw*, a Mandarin paper with a circulation of 12,000, published by the Committee for the Promotion of Mandarin, Taipeh, Formosa. By means of type with phonetic symbols alongside the characters (system known as Juh-in Fwuahaw) some assistance is given to those new literates who have learnt the phonetic symbols.

2. See 'Adult education campaign in the northern region of Nigeria' (p. 39 of this issue—Ed.).

3. Details of this readership survey are contained in an unpublished report, 'The Vernacular Literature Bureau in a National Plan', by Mr. M. D. Sugathapala, the Unesco expert who assisted the Bureau in carrying out the survey.

was a list of eight books published by the Bureau, and the reader was asked to indicate his preferences and dislikes, giving the reasons.

A similar experiment was conducted in the same year by Dr. Seth Spaulding on behalf of the Latin American Fundamental Education Press.¹ This survey was designed to assess the reading ability as well as the reading interests of new literates in Costa Rica and Mexico, and to test the effectiveness of text and illustrations of a number of booklets produced by the Latin American Fundamental Education Press. The investigation into reading interests was conducted by means of written questionnaires administered by teachers and extension workers who had been given a brief period of training by Dr. Spaulding. The questionnaire itself was less comprehensive than that used in the Gold Coast survey. It was concerned only with reading preferences and comprehension, and did not touch upon such matters as the availability and cost of books, motives for reading, or physical reading conditions. (The survey itself was more elaborate than the Gold Coast one, but it did not rely exclusively on questionnaires. Information was also obtained by means of individual comprehension tests and a teacher survey.) The part of the questionnaire relating to reading preferences gave a list of five subjects (health, home care, stories, legends and agriculture) which were to be checked in order of preference, and two blank spaces for further reading interests.

Dr. Spaulding points out that in the case of many new literates the mechanical difficulty of understanding and completing a questionnaire may limit the value of a survey of this kind. He also mentions that it is difficult for a new literate, who has had very little reading experience on which to base his judgement, to have a clear idea as to what he might want to read if it were available to him. Nevertheless, the results of this part of the survey are interesting. An interest in purely recreational reading was found to be commoner among the readers who had enjoyed a longer period of schooling than among the less educated, who presumably had greater technical reading difficulties, and who generally preferred reading matter more directly related to their occupations and personal welfare.² The results of a survey of this kind, while indisputably useful with regard to a particular reading audience in a particular environment, should not necessarily be regarded as applicable to other audiences in other areas.

In the case of periodical literature, what is required is not only initial polls and surveys of the kind mentioned above, but a system for continued evaluation. This evaluation not only involves the maintenance of close contact with readers (letters to the editor, etc.), but can also be effected through committees established specially for this purpose. For example, the Social Development Office, Arusha, Tanganyika, which publishes a monthly newspaper in Swahili (Arumeru), states that:

The paper is controlled by an Editorial Advisory Committee which is comprised of an African representative from each tribe, the Editor, and the Social Development Assistant responsible for Literacy Groups and Women's Clubs. The Advisory Committee meets monthly and comments on each issue and recommends changes from time to time. This has proved a satisfactory means of keeping in touch with readers' opinions and for seeking independent news on format, etc. All letters from readers offering suggestions are also discussed by the Advisory Committee and action taken when necessary.³

New literates are keenly interested in whatever directly touches their everyday life. The following extracts from replies to Unesco's questionnaire on periodicals serve to illustrate this point:

1. This literature-producing agency was set up by agreement between Unesco and the Organization of American States (OAS) in June 1950. The agency is operated by the OAS.
2. Full details of this survey are given in Dr. Spaulding's thesis, 'An investigation of factors which influence the effectiveness of fundamental education reading materials for Latin America', obtainable in microfilm (No. 149) from Ohio State University, U.S.A. Further references to this comprehensive evaluation experiment are made in the course of the present report.
3. Reply to Unesco's questionnaire on periodicals.

[Our readers want] local news. A very strong demand, indeed. (Vernacular Literature Bureau, Gold Coast.)

[Our readers like material dealing with] local affairs [not political but dealing with everyday happenings], information with local application, practical instruction dealing with problems of agriculture and health, poems in the local idiom.

Our readers prefer subjects concerning the evolution of customs, their present and future social position, their family and professional life, the education of their wives and children, their relations with white men, etc. (*La Voix du Congolais*, Belgian Congo).

A subject breakdown of the publication lists of two producing agencies is interesting in the light it throws on the different kinds of reading interest being catered for. The following analysis is taken from the 1951 publications list of the Jamia Milia Islamia. At this period, before the institute had begun to receive any financial support from the government, over 500 simple booklets for newly literate adults had been produced, as follows: The first step (a primer and 5 simple readers), 6; Health and hygiene, 11; General knowledge, 16; Occupations, 10; Arithmetic, 4; History, 20; Geography, 14; Civics, 11; Politics, 17; Literature for parents, 11; Literature for adult education workers, 11; Religion, 41; Biography, 44; Fiction and poetry (An introduction to famous books (folk stories), 40; An introduction to famous Hindi poets, 78; An introduction to famous Urdu poets, 70; Famous Urdu prose writers, 58; Famous Hindi prose writers, 42; Miscellaneous literature, 3; Literature of other lands, 15) 306.

The second analysis is taken from the 1955 publications list of the East African Literature Bureau. The Bureau has been functioning since April 1948 and this list represents both books published under its own imprint and books produced by commercial publishers. The analysis should be interpreted with some caution since the list covers items in English and 16 East African languages; many items exist in more than one language, and all these versions are included in the total figure for each category.

The Bureau caters for a wide reading public, ranging from the new literate to the fully literate reader. While the publication list does not distinguish between difficulty levels, it is clear that some of the books (especially many of those produced in English) are intended for advanced readers only. Wherever possible these are indicated in the following analysis, but it should be remembered that this is only an approximate breakdown.

The Bureau produces a number of publications such as school books, teachers' guides, literacy primers, language studies, etc. Again, wherever possible, these are indicated in the analysis: Agriculture, 49; Health and hygiene, 39; Civics and morals (including 10 at advanced level and 1 school textbook), 49; History (including 22 at advanced level and 1 school textbook), 39; Biography, 20; Tribal customs and folklore (including 8 at advanced level), 36; Education, general (School textbooks, teachers' handbooks, syllabuses, literacy primers, language studies, etc., 83; Homecraft and needlework, 11; Machines and their care, 3; Sports, 3; Handbooks for authors, 3; Money and trade, 10; Miscellaneous, 19) 132; Fiction and poetry, 42.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF MATERIAL

How is an agency to set about finding or producing the material which it publishes? The problem is not a serious one for the type of agency whose task is one of selection rather than of production. The encouragement of local authorship is one of the stated aims of nearly all the literature bureaux in Africa and Asia, and there is a large response—one finds again and again in the annual reports of these bureaux the statement that in the course of the year they have received more manuscripts than they have been able to deal with. To stimulate work of a high quality, many bureaux organize competitions for original vernacular manuscripts and these have resulted in a number of publications of a very high standard.

An example of such a competition conducted on a regional basis can be found in the

annual award of the Margaret Wrong Memorial Medal and Prize for books by African authors. A memorial fund was set up by Margaret Wrong's many friends in Africa, Europe and North America to commemorate her life-long work in the encouragement of African writers and the building up of an African literature. In 1954 the medal, which had hitherto been offered for works in European languages by African authors, was presented to a Uganda writer, Mr. M. S. Nsimbi, for a book published in Luganda. The awards for 1955 and 1956 were offered in turn to the authors of works in a West African language and a Central African language. A further change has now been made in the terms of award. It has been decided to abandon the prize competition for manuscripts in metropolitan languages and the award of a medal for published works in the vernacular. In their stead, a medal and money prize will be awarded annually to an African from any part of Africa south of the Sahara who has given outstanding services to literature during the previous year.

In order to help local authors to write suitable material for publication, the East African Literature Bureau has issued a series of free pamphlets entitled *Helps and Explanations to African Authors*. The first explains in simple terms how a book is published, describes the relationships between author, publisher, printer and bookseller, the rights of author and translator, and explains why certain manuscripts are not suitable for publication. The second pamphlet defines different forms of writing—articles, fiction, autobiography, tribal studies, etc.—and gives general advice about writing in each form. The third pamphlet consists of notes on the social and political organization of African tribes.

A scheme for training authors to write specifically for new literates was undertaken in 1953-54 by the Government of India. With the financial assistance of the Ford Foundation, four 'literacy workshops' were organized. Each lasted a month and gave training to some 25 authors in writing and testing reading materials for rural new literates.

While a distributing agency may do its best to encourage writers to supply it with material, the manuscripts received are often unsolicited. In contrast, the producing agency generally has to take more active steps to secure material for publication. Two methods are commonly employed. Manuscripts are written by the editorial staff of the bureau, or outside authors are commissioned to write on special subjects. In either case, the problem of authorship is bound up with two others: the necessity for sound technical content in a number of subject fields, and the need to present this material in a form suitable for newly literate adults. The difficulty is to find an author equipped with both the specialized knowledge required and the technique of simple presentation. The difficulty is still greater when the material has to be written in a vernacular language. A solution to this problem was suggested by Dr. Rupert East (at the time Director of the Literature Bureau, Zaria, Northern Nigeria) in a paper presented to a conference on literacy teaching in Africa, held in London in 1947 under the auspices of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa and the University of London Institute of Education:

If a pamphlet is required on some technical subject, say the food value of milk, the treatment for guinea worm, or the making of cement floors, it is possible, of course, to ask a technical man to prepare an article on the subject, of suitable length, and then translate it. But it is very hard for technical experts to deal with their own subject sufficiently simply for this purpose, and they may resent their script being cut about and watered down to make it intelligible to the almost illiterate peasant. They may believe that they have made it simple enough for the meanest intelligence. But an important point to note is that simple English is not necessarily easy to reproduce in an African language. It depends on similarity of thought. . . . So we have found that the most satisfactory way is to collect the material by verbal interview. We ring up the local departmental officer or expert on the subject we want, and ask him if he can spare a quarter of an hour to interview one of our young men and give him some facts for an article on fruit trees, or turkey breeding, or bicycle repairing, or whatever the subject may be. He probably won't mind doing this if

handled tactfully. The writer takes his note-book and sets off on his bicycle, comes back and writes up his article in language which he knows will appeal to his fellow-African in the village.¹

There is often difficulty in achieving technical accuracy in materials which may have undergone substantial editorial changes. While it is not practical for an agency to employ specialists in, say, health or agriculture on its permanent staff, it is usually in close contact with the various government departments, and these may be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the final publication. The Latin American Fundamental Education Press deals with this problem by means of four expert committees on agriculture, health, education and economic and social affairs. These committees provide the ideas and basic data for the agency's publications, and then re-examine the final texts after they have been edited for language and style.

For many agencies, one of the most serious problems is that of producing suitable material in a number of different languages. The dangers and difficulties of translating into the vernaculars have been much discussed and it is generally agreed that the translation of, say, an English text into another language, which may differ enormously in idiom and patterns of thought, is rarely an ideal solution. All the same, where there is a lack of authors competent to write suitable material in their own vernaculars, translation represents the only practical answer, and in actual fact one finds that most of the multilingual agencies produce many items in at least two or three of the languages served. (Some titles even appear in the publication list of more than one agency.) To quote again from Dr. Rupert East:

In the case of articles of general application an English translation is sometimes made, which can be used, with suitable adjustments, for reproduction in other African languages. But the important thing is that the original draft should be done by an African in his own language. It is easy to translate from one African language into another, particularly when the cultural background is similar, as in the case of, say Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, or the peoples living on the coast. But it is a great mistake to write the article in English in the first place and send it round for translation. The purpose of the English version which we sometimes provide with the vernacular script is more for the guidance of European technical and education officers who do not speak the particular language of the original. If it is to be used as a script for retranslation into other African languages, it is important that it should be a word-for-word translation to preserve the African idiom, even though it may sound awkward to English ears. Usually, however, it is better to find a bilingual African who will translate direct from one African language to the other.²

The above remarks also apply, of course, to features suitable for inclusion in periodicals. As far as local news items are concerned (and these make up by far the greater part of the content of newspapers for new literates), such items must be gathered and written by the publication's own staff with whatever help can be obtained from the local authorities and population. Thus, for example, the North Regional Literature Agency, Nigeria, receives local news items from the adult education and Native Authority organizations in the provinces, and from private individuals who are encouraged to contribute. Because of their lack of topical interest, news items received from abroad can be used only sparingly.

SIMPLIFICATION OF STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Reading Research

Reading material for newly literate adults must be carefully simplified in language and style. The methods to be used in achieving this simplification have not, however, received much scientific study. Preliminary research into general reading processes has been

1. L. J. Lewis, Margaret Wrong (eds.), *Towards a Literate Africa*, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1948, pp. 21-22.

2. op. cit.

necessary to prepare the ground for this specialized study. For the most part, research of this kind has been carried out in the educationally developed countries, has been restricted to such widely spoken languages as English, French and Spanish, and has been directed more towards the reading processes of children than towards those of adults.

Nevertheless, the work which has been carried out in this field by such experts as Dr. Rodriguez Bou¹ in Puerto Rico has established a number of general principles which can be applied to the simplification of adult reading matter in any language. Some form of vocabulary control, where possible based on a scientifically prepared word list, is essential. New and difficult words must be carefully introduced and repeated. Repetition should be frequent at first, and more widely spaced at later stages of the book. Sentences and paragraphs should be short and syntax simple. Style should be direct and personal. The use of dialogue and the presentation of information in story form makes for easy attractive reading.

Vocabulary Control

The preparation of a word list is a prerequisite to the control of vocabulary, which otherwise depends on the arbitrary and subjective judgement of writer or editor. Such control of vocabulary is particularly important at the teaching stage. Within the last 35 years, word-frequency counts have been made in English, French, Spanish and other European languages and have been used mainly as a basis for writing graded school textbooks and for teaching modern languages. Such lists have generally been compiled only from written sources and until very recently there has been no attempt to draw from oral vocabulary as well. In Spanish, however, examples of both types of lists exist.

The first Spanish word count was compiled by Milton A. Buchanan in 1927, and lists in order of frequency words taken from a selection of literary, technical and periodical printed materials. The second important list is that compiled by Dr. Rodriguez Bou in 1952, which includes words drawn from a far wider field of sources—spoken vocabulary, children's compositions, radio programmes, advertisements, religious literature, etc., as well as the words already included in the Buchanan count.

There is little doubt that a word list on which to base the vocabulary of reading material for newly literate adults should be drawn from oral as well as written sources. On the assumption that the spoken vocabulary of the illiterate provides a good basis for the new literate's reading vocabulary, a word list was prepared in an African vernacular in 1953 by the Gold Coast Vernacular Literature Bureau, with the help of a Unesco expert. A preliminary word-frequency count was made from a selection of materials in Twi already brought out by the Bureau. The list was then submitted to two language experts who revised and amplified it in the light of their experience of the spoken vocabulary of illiterates in the region. Each word in the revised list was then tested for comprehension by a panel of 10 illiterates (three men, three women, two boys and two girls over 14 years of age) selected from different walks of life. According to the number of votes awarded to each word, a final list containing the most common thousand words in conversational use was compiled.²

Readability Formulas

A readability formula provides some means of assessing objectively the difficulty of written material, and enables material to be graded scientifically. A formula may take into account a number of factors affecting reading difficulty—vocabulary load, sentence

1. See Ismael Rodriguez Bou, *Suggestions for the Preparation of Reading Matter* (*Occasional Papers in Education*, No.2), Paris, Unesco, December 1949, and *Normas para evaluación de libros de lectura para la escuela elemental*, Higher Educational Council of Puerto Rico, Series 11, 1947, No. 111.

2. Condensed from an unpublished report by H. D. Sugathapale, 'The Vernacular Literature Bureau in a National Plan'.

length, length of words (in syllables), syntax, etc.—and the various formulas which have been devised differ according to the number and type of such factors considered.¹

A comparatively simple readability formula is used for grading the booklets produced by the Latin American Fundamental Education Press. This takes into account only two factors: vocabulary load and average sentence length, the vocabulary load being measured by tabulating all the words not included in the first 1,500 of the Buchanan count and dividing this figure by the total number of words in the passage being sampled.

A more elaborate formula is that devised by Dr. Irving Lorge, which takes into account a third factor, the ratio of prepositional phrases to the total number of words in the sampled passage. The Lorge formula, while originally devised for the purpose of grading children's textbooks, has also been found effective in estimating the difficulty of reading materials for adults. It has been used for grading textbooks prepared by the U.S. Literacy Education Project, and more recently for grading the *Home and Family Life* series of readers produced for adults in Jamaica.²

Unscientific Simplification

All literature bureaux aim at a simple style (at least for some of their publications) but many of them lack the facilities for scientific simplification. Vocabulary control by means of a word list, for example, demands three things: the establishment of a word list in the language concerned, training in its use, and a considerable amount of time. The controlled repetition of difficult words similarly requires more than an ability to identify the words which have to be treated in this way. Again, the grading of materials by means of a readability formula, however simple the formula, is a lengthy and intricate process.

Many agencies are therefore more or less obliged to dispense with these scientific techniques, and to rely on the subjective judgement of the writer, who must, however, possess an understanding of local idiom, and a facility for simple, direct expression. This applies particularly to the production of periodical reading matter, where the time element alone would preclude the use of elaborate methods of simplification.

Admittedly it is impossible, without recourse to scientific methods, to estimate accurately the difficulty of a text, but most literature bureaux have to cater for a very wide range of abilities in their reading public and the materials which they put out do in fact cover a corresponding range of difficulty. As far as non-periodical literature is concerned, provided that a sufficient quantity of material is produced, the likelihood is that any reader will be able to find something which matches his ability. The difficulty is felt rather in the matter of periodical literature, which inevitably has to be aimed at a range of different levels. No set prescription exists, however, for determining the volume and difficulty of given items in terms of the people likely to be interested in them, and this has to be left to the discretion of the editors. This problem can therefore be very serious when experienced staff is not available. It has, nevertheless, gradually been overcome by a number of agencies which started without the assistance of professional journalists.

Illustrations

Illustrations have a double part to play in publications for new literates. They increase the attractiveness of the material and they help the reader to understand the text. The former role is obvious and needs no supporting evidence, the latter has been effectively

1. See: Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, *A Formula for predicting Readability*, Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, 1948.

2. Details of the Lorge formula and its use in the Jamaica programme are given in an article by Ella W. Griffin in *Fundamental and Adult Education*, Vol. VI, No. 3, July 1954.

demonstrated by Dr. Spaulding's survey in Costa Rica and Mexico. In the course of this survey he carried out a number of individual comprehension tests using the same booklets with and without their illustrations. Of the eleven booklets tested in this way, eight proved to be more easily and fully understood when accompanied by their illustrations than without.

A most important point in providing suitable illustrations for the new literate is, of course, that of content. In this respect, the necessity of depicting familiar persons, objects or scenes is beyond question and has been stressed unanimously by field workers from a number of different regions. Several statements to this effect are given below:

Our readers like, in particular, illustrations concerning their country, social, family and professional life and generally attach little importance to events outside their country—*La Voix du Congolais*, Belgian Congo.

The following kinds of illustrations are popular with our readers: photographs of local personalities and events of notable Africans in other countries; drawings, some by an African artist, illustrating the serial and short stories (these are kept simple and are boldly drawn, as is customary in magazine fiction in other countries); diagrams illustrating physiological references in the doctor's page; diagrams illustrating the women's page—East African Literature Bureau, Kenya.

Our readers like illustrations of local personalities, clear documentary photographs of things they can recognize—The North Regional Literature Agency, Nigeria.

Our readers like illustrations of people rather than general scenes—The Protectorate Literature Bureau, Sierra Leone.

Illustrations can be realistic, impressionistic or stylized. They may take the form of cartoon strips. Not all of these forms are, however, equally well understood by new literates. The new literate has, in fact, generally had as little experience in looking at pictures as he has had in reading, and may have as much difficulty in understanding the one as the other.

Illustrations which seem both attractive and intelligible to well-practised readers are often quite meaningless, or convey the wrong meaning, to people unused to interpreting visual symbols. There is therefore a need, as an integral part of the production process, for simple techniques of testing the intelligibility of illustrations on samples of the intended readership. Captions nearly always help beginning readers to interpret illustrations, but care must be taken to distinguish clearly between words addressed to the reader and dialogue among the characters depicted.

Realistic illustrations which enable objects to be portrayed faithfully have therefore been found to be the most effective. They are usually either photographs or line-drawings, the former having the chance of being the most realistic. The following statement from the North Regional Literature Agency, Nigeria, tends to indicate, however, that too much realism and detail can make illustrations difficult for new literates to understand: 'Photographs are not easy to read and line-drawings are more easily read than photographs. Complicated photographs are not acceptable, especially as reproduction on newsprint is not always clear. Attempts to explain unfamiliar things by means of photographs are not easily successful, especially as sophisticated photographs are often concerned with "interesting" angles and patterns of light and shade. In this connexion, light and shade are not welcome even in line-drawings, where elaborate shading techniques are to be avoided.' Dr. Spaulding's survey would tend to support the above statement; it found that too much extraneous detail caused confusion, as there was a tendency to read meaning into all portions of a picture.

Impressionistic drawings give only an outline of the object shown. They are much simpler to draw than realistic ones, but the part played by the reader in understanding them appears to be greater. Dr. Spaulding's survey demonstrated, in fact, that realistic drawings were more effective than both impressionistic drawings and stylized wood-cuts. In the individual comprehension tests referred to earlier, none of the booklets which were equally well understood in both the illustrated and unillustrated versions contained realistic drawings. In general, therefore, though there is certainly room for

further research on this matter, the use of impressionistic drawings cannot be recommended unreservedly.

Cartoon strips enable text and illustrations to be related very closely. The advisability of using this form of illustration in literature for beginning readers is, however, still a controversial subject and again calls for further research. The East African Literature Bureau, for example, believes the strip cartoon feature in its periodicals to be popular. The *Journal de l'Étoile*, Nyota, Belgian Congo, finds that cartoons have only a mediocre success. The North Regional Literature Agency, Nigeria, states: 'Strip cartoons are acceptable provided they are free of exaggeration, distortion and caricature. Such things as a face on the sun, a vegetable with face and legs, or animals in clothes and credited with human attributes, are disliked. Figures such as appear in joke drawings and strips in Western publications are usually written of as "devils".' Similarly, *La Voix du Congolais* states that their readers accept cartoons provided that 'scenes are simple and concrete and involve only one idea'.

In general, the proper use of colour requires considerable editorial experience. Bold primary colours are undoubtedly an attraction, particularly for decorative purposes. Unusual colouring of familiar things (e.g. red sky, green chickens), should be avoided, as tending to confuse the reader.

A final point concerning illustrations is that their relationship to the text should be continually kept in mind. The East African Literature Bureau reports: 'If the ratio of pictures to print is high, buyers are not attracted. New readers want something to read, not publications to look at.'

The Physical Appearance of Materials

The vital qualities of attractiveness and readability, which have already been stressed in connexion with the textual content of materials for new literates, should apply with equal force to their physical appearance. It is not within the scope of these notes to make detailed recommendations on such matters as type size, format, layout, etc., which in any case have to depend on available means rather than ideal standards. However, the experience of agencies producing this type of material has proved the validity of the few general rules for improving legibility which follow.

A good, legible style of type must be used. Type less than 10 points in size should never be used for running texts, and 12-point, or better still, 14-point type is recommended. The Latin American Fundamental Education Press has even used 18-point type with excellent results in some of its publications. The need for large characters applies, of course, not only to Roman type but also to other scripts. According to the Society for the Promotion of Mandarin:¹ 'The type which we use is Chinese No. 5, which is the equivalent of 10 points, with phonetic symbols alongside taking up half as much space as that of a 10-point character. . . . We cannot, for financial reasons, use more space (as we think would be desirable), and it is technically difficult to reduce further our type sizes, since this would render the phonetic symbols illegible.'

Column width in periodicals is dependent on type size and it should therefore be larger in easy-to-read publications than in those using smaller type. Approximately forty characters per column is generally accepted as a good measure.

White space should be used constructively. There should be at least three-quarters of an inch of white space all around a page, outside the printed area, and enough white space should be allowed between the columns to prevent the new literate from reading across two columns at a time.

In layout, simplicity should be the key-note. Unnecessary lines and decorations should be avoided. Illustrations should be large enough to be seen easily at normal reading distance, and should not be allowed to clutter up the page. In booklets where less

1. See note 1 on p. 18.

than full-page illustrations are used, these should be placed either at the top or bottom of the page and never in the centre, where they tend to break the continuity of the text.

Layout problems apply, of course, more to newspapers and magazines than to non-periodical reading matter. The following points have been found useful in achieving a clear layout for periodicals for new literates. For headlines, capitals should be used only at the beginning of the first word and for the beginnings of names. The headlines should, as far as possible, be immediately above the articles to which they refer, with the whole covering a rectangle or square. An article and its heading might be 'boxed in', with lines between the columns, so as to identify it as a single unit. Column rules within an article itself should be omitted. For magazines, care should be taken to harmonize two opposite pages with each other.

With format too, more factors need to be considered in the case of periodicals than with non-periodical reading matter. For the latter, a small pocket-size has generally been found the most acceptable: $5 \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ inches seems to be the average size adopted for these materials, but no precise standard dimensions are recommended. One agency, the Latin American Fundamental Education Press, which had previously adopted a format of $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ inches, later found it advisable for reasons of 'portability' to reduce the size of its booklets to $4\frac{1}{2} \times 7$ inches.

With regard to periodicals, experience has proved that the usual distinctions in the physical appearance of different kinds of newspapers and magazines lose much of their significance in publications for new literates. For instance, when experienced readers are being catered for, there is an advantage in using a 'standard' or full-page size (16×24 inches) which permits the arrangement of a number of articles and advertisements. In periodicals for beginning readers, it is, on the contrary, advisable to present fewer articles per page and to try to have every article complete within the page. Since, in addition, articles in such periodicals should be shorter than those for experienced readers, a tabloid (12×16 inches), or even a somewhat smaller page size, is sufficient. The following newspaper page sizes have been found to be satisfactory by a number of agencies: North Regional Literature Agency, Nigeria, $12\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$; Adult Education Association, Federation of Malaya, $10\frac{3}{4} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$; Vernacular Literature Bureau, Gold Coast, 10×15 ; East African Literature Bureau, Kenya, 10×14 inches.

On the other hand, a larger format for magazines has been found advisable, since it more easily permits the use of photographs and other illustrations. For example, *El Kubar*, a monthly magazine in Arabic published by the Government of the Sudan, which began with a format of 7×10 inches, later had to be increased to $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches.

DISTRIBUTION AND SALES

Of all the difficulties connected with the provision of reading materials for new literates' the problem of their distribution and sale is perhaps the most intractable.

The seriousness of the problem is stressed by every agency engaged in this work. Where the reading habit is not established or widespread the literature-buying habit is still less established. Where no commercial market exists, the normal channels for distributing printed matter are lacking, and where communications in sparsely populated areas are bad the difficulty of reaching the whole potential reading public is enormous. Nevertheless, the whole success of a literature programme clearly depends upon a solution to this problem. There is no use in producing reading materials, however well-prepared and attractive, if they do not reach the public or if people cannot be induced to buy them.

It should be noted that these are two distinct problems. There is a danger of regarding book distribution as being synonymous with bookselling. Since one of the long-term aims of a literature bureau is to build up a healthy, self-supporting book trade, the principle of selling publications rather than giving them away is always strongly upheld:

sometimes large quantities of materials are bought up by government departments for use in agricultural extension or community development work. If, as is often the case, such redistribution is free, it serves to make certain kinds of reading matter available and may help to foster the reading habit; but it does nothing to encourage the habit of *buying* literature. This channel of distribution is therefore of limited value. Free distribution has the further disadvantage of making it difficult to assess the value of materials according to sales figures, which is often the only method of evaluation available to a literature bureau.

Actual methods of sale and distribution vary from one bureau to another, mainly because an agency has to take advantage of whatever facilities already exist. Thus, for example, in Africa, where Christian missions have already established a network of book depots, these provide a useful distribution channel for literature bureaux in the region. Wherever possible, local traders are supplied with stock, often on a sale-or-return basis, but the traders often need help in demonstrating their stock and encouraging sales.

The mobile book van has become one of the most popular methods of distribution and a number of agencies now possess one or more of these vans, staffed with trained salesmen. The following extract from a report of the Gold Coast Vernacular Literature Bureau illustrates the value of this method:

It is not sufficient just to have local agents, since many of these will inevitably be rather passive, selling books to those who come to buy them, but unlikely to push their wares to any great extent, since they have insufficient time and little incentive.

It is necessary rather to take the books right into the villages where the people live and to exercise a considerable degree of salesmanship to persuade them to buy. The Bureau has been fortunate in that the operation of three book vans, supplied by the Department of Social Welfare from Colonial Development and Welfare funds, has been entrusted to it. It has been found essential to mount loudspeakers on each of these vans, so that all and sundry become aware of its presence immediately on its arrival in a village. The vans have visited mass literacy rallies wherever possible, but the response on these occasions has been disappointing. The best results have been obtained by visiting towns and villages on market days.

The North Regional Literature Bureau, Nigeria, which considers distribution its major problem, has created a special Distribution Section responsible for sales and the distribution of material for free issue. At present the great bulk of the Agency's business, which includes the selling of books as well as of periodicals, is done by mail or rail to official bodies (Native Authorities), established bookshops, and a gradually increasing number of private agents and individual private orders. Twelve book vans will visit main markets. Plans are going forward for fixed selling branches of the Agency. A tentative suggestion has been made for the fitting out of a bookshop-launch to ply on the navigable waterways that centre around the confluence of the Niger and the Benue rivers.

The distribution problem is of course specially important in the case of periodicals, because their content is dated. A number of periodicals are distributed through the post, but the time needed for transmission is sometimes found to be rather long.

Several agencies which produce periodicals with substantial circulations have therefore developed their own distribution systems. The bulk of the distribution of the Bantu Press Group newspapers, for example, has always been done by African agents. This gives rise to problems such as credit control for men who may well have no assets, or lack of initiative on the part of the agents, but it does offer the advantage of allowing full African participation in this basic aspect of newspaper operation. There are several thousand Bantu Press Group sales agents in the Union and the various territories of Southern and Central Africa. Efforts are being made by the Press to enable the most reliable and progressive of these to set up their own establishments which, as well-organized distribution points for books as well as newspapers, will be of direct assistance in the drive for increased literacy.

As a means of making literature accessible to the reading public, libraries have of course an extremely important part to play, and the development of library services in areas where reading matter is not easily available has been receiving considerable attention in recent years. In a number of countries—India and Indonesia are two outstanding examples—national and locally organized public library services make a valuable contribution towards providing reading matter for new literates.

Some literature bureaux organize their own library services. An impressive example is that of the East Africa Literature Bureau, which has branch establishments in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, from which a network of local bookbox libraries are stocked with books in English and East African languages. In addition, each branch establishment operates a postal library service, issuing books (in the Kenya branch) at the rate of over 2,000 a month.

Libraries have also been established by national governments with international assistance. Probably the most extensive service of this kind is that provided in India by the Delhi Public Library which now, four years after its establishment in 1951 as a Unesco-Government of India pilot project, has a stock of over 60,000 books in English, Urdu and Hindi and serves 70,000 readers a month. The Library not only caters for the urban population of Delhi but has a mobile service which extends into rural areas. A similar project was started at the end of 1954 in Medellin, Colombia. This library also has a bookmobile to reach the outlying districts and now serves over 30,000 readers a month.¹

ADULT LITERACY CLASSES IN THE CAMEROONS UNDER U.K. ADMINISTRATION

ELIZABETH O' KELLY

The Bamenda area of the Southern Cameroons, which is the area covered by this article, is plateau country of an average height of four to six thousand feet and surrounded by hills rising up to nine thousand feet. Once the forest belt in the extreme south is left behind, the terrain is mostly rolling grassland. The community is essentially rural and there are no large towns. The number of roads is increasing but communications are still difficult and many villages can be reached only on foot. Illiteracy is high, the 1953 census putting the figure at 96 per cent in a population of 429,000.

In the last two years efforts have been made to reduce this by starting literacy classes for adults throughout the area. The programme is a formal one, but the course is designed to be as flexible as possible and to take from eighteen months to two years according to the number of sessions held each week. Arithmetic is taught as well as reading and writing, but, for reasons which will be given later, no attempt has been made to organize a mass literacy campaign. The climate is such that for at least nine months of the year classes must meet indoors, usually in a school, but sometimes in a chief's compound or a house specially built by the students.

At present, 2,598 men and 1,756 women are attending 214 classes in the area. Children below the age of 15 are not admitted. Their presence would reduce the adult attendance,

1. Information about these and other related projects may be found in the *Unesco Public Library Manuals*. This series is concerned with the development of public library services, particularly in connexion with fundamental education and literature programmes.

since older persons do not like to be laughed at by their juniors if they make mistakes, and would make difficulties for the instructor who should employ a different technique with adults from that used with children. Nor is it desirable that the latter should be encouraged to attend when there are vacancies for them in the schools.

There are six full-time paid organizers in the area and they are each responsible for between 20 and 30 centres and between 30 and 40 classes. They are expected to tour their areas for at least 20 days of each month, preferably more. They check the registers and encourage the students to attend regularly, give talks to the chiefs and councillors on the necessity for literacy, find suitable instructors for the classes and from time to time hold training courses for them. They themselves receive frequent instruction from the Adult Education Officer. They are all ex-schoolteachers but of varying standards, since character, integrity, energy, initiative and a real desire to help their people are as important in such work as actual teaching qualifications.

The class instructors at first gave their services free but now receive five shillings a month each from the native authorities provided that at least 10 students are attending the class regularly. This has removed their former complaints that in taking the classes they were out of pocket, whilst the sum involved is so small that the principle of voluntary service is not entirely abandoned.

The adult education organizers carry round stocks of books for sale to the classes. Instructors receive free copies for their own use. This proved necessary as otherwise there was a tendency to substitute school textbooks with which they were more familiar, and which they happened to have at hand.

The books used are those published by Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., under the title *I will speak English*. The series *English through Pictures* was tried first but proved too complicated for most of the instructors, who tended to regard the numerous pictures as illustrations only and failed to make proper use of them. This was especially true of Books I and II, while the lines left in Book I for the student to fill in himself were useless when several students were sharing the same book—an undesirable but very frequent situation. The new series, which was designed for the Gold Coast campaign, is more straightforward and contains more practical information.

The course is divided into three grades. The beginners start with the letters of the alphabet, not in order, but grouped according to their shapes, the round letters first and then those consisting of simple up and down strokes such as 'b' and 'd', which learners often confuse. They next learn 26 key words, each starting with one of the letters they have learned. They then go on to the primer. The phonetics method of teaching is used, but not always insisted upon. A surprising number of students have somehow learned to repeat the alphabet parrot fashion before they join the classes, and where they have learnt to call 'a' . . . 'ay' they are only upset and confused if the instructor insists that it is 'ah'. It is better in such cases to proceed gradually.

The intermediate grade reads Book I and the advanced grade Book II. No arithmetic textbook is used in the beginners' classes. They learn merely to write the numerals and to do simple addition and subtraction. In the other two grades the Longmans, Green *New African Arithmetic* is used, Books I and II. These books, however, are issued only to the instructors and the sums from them copied on to the board so as to keep students' expenditure on books as low as possible. The three readers cost 3s.6d. In addition the student must buy a writing and arithmetic exercise book and a pencil. Tuition is free. At the end of the advanced class the students take a test and those who are successful receive a certificate and a book, a different one for each student so that they can be exchanged when read. The test is conducted by the organizer, and the papers marked by the Adult Education Officer to ensure a consistent standard.

English must be used as the medium of instruction since there are more than twenty different native languages in the area, none of which (with the exception of Bali) possesses an orthography or is spoken by enough people to justify creating one. Bali was developed by the Basel Mission in the early German days in the hope of making it

universal. The other tribes, however, regarded this as an attempt to place the Bali people over them and use of the language has therefore never spread. Pidgin English is the chief means of communication between tribes, and English is the language taught in the schools.

The use of English, of course, presents many difficulties and precludes mass literacy methods such as those employed in Laubach's 'Each one teach one' campaigns. As anyone who has played the game of 'whispering' at school will realise, a sentence in an imperfectly understood foreign language passed on by word of mouth will eventually be distorted beyond recognition. It is rarely possible, therefore, for ex-students to act as instructors. These have to be recruited from the ranks of the schoolteachers, which has a limiting effect on classes if there is no school nearby. Sometimes a Standard VI boy can be used but this is not on the whole desirable. His English will be adequate but one of the objects of the classes is to give the adults confidence in themselves, and to remove the sense of inferiority they feel in the presence of literate youth. It is consequently important that their classes be conducted, wherever possible, by a man of their own age and not by a schoolboy who will only emphasize the gap between them.

Where the instructor is a native of the village the approach to English is made verbally through the vernacular and this usually achieves the quickest results. Elsewhere pidgin English has to be used. This bears very little resemblance to orthodox English either in the construction of sentences or in vocabulary and can indeed cause considerable confusion since many English words have quite different meanings in pidgin, as, for example, in the phrase 'I done findum but I no lookum' where the meanings of 'find' and 'look' have been transposed. Similarly one 'hears' a smell and 'drinks' a cigar. Because of this, a student can make little progress in the early stages, without supervision.

On the other hand, once these initial difficulties have been overcome there are many advantages in the use of English. The higher standard of teaching which it necessitates ensures more permanent results than are usually obtained in the more rapidly conducted mass campaigns. Students, too, are able to draw upon the whole wealth of English literature instead of being restricted to a limited number of books in the vernacular. Nor is it necessary to print books specially before the campaign can start. Perhaps most valuable of all, one of the chief barriers to progress in the Cameroons—the diversity of languages—will be removed as the knowledge of English spreads.

Other difficulties that have to be faced in organizing the courses are doubtless common to all such campaigns. Classes stop for no apparent reason. Women are busy planting. Men go away for long trading journeys lasting several weeks. Instructors are transferred by their employers and reliefs cannot be found. Students able to read a few simple words cease to attend the classes, confident that they now 'savvy book'. Worst of all is the difficulty of obtaining 'follow-up' literature. The newly literate reads for profit rather than pleasure. He wants books that will tell him how to do something and he wants them brought to him. He is not prepared to go for miles in search of them or to pay much when he has found them. The one small bookshop in the area is therefore totally inadequate, and its stock of books unsuitable. Something on the lines of a mobile bookshop touring the whole area and using a high pressure sales technique will have to be developed if the students are not to relapse into illiteracy in a year or two. There is also a need for publishers in England to produce supplementary readers suitable for adults.

Nevertheless if such work is occasionally discouraging it can also be rewarding. The effect that the ability to read and write can have on adult morale is startling and touching. As one student has written (and his mistakes have been left uncorrected): 'In 1953 I was an illiterate, always surprised when someone is reading or writing. Sometimes I may think he is what is called an angel, sometimes when I think over and over again but could not discover what he is doing I simply say he may be looking at the black dots on the paper. And now I can read and write which is what I believe I couldn't do, I should thank God for my knowledge.'

UNESCO ASSOCIATED PROJECTS—XII: METHODS OF TEACHING ADULTS TO READ AND WRITE IN CUBA

DR. ANA ECHEGOYEN DE CAÑIZARES

In 1949 the Inter-American Seminar on Adult Literacy and Education was held in Brazil, under the auspices of the Brazilian Government, the Organization of American States and Unesco. One of the seminar's study groups in its conclusions stated: 'The method used during the first stage of teaching to read has a permanent effect on how quickly reading is mastered and on the final results. Consequently, teaching to read should begin with a method based on established scientific principles. . . .' Recognizing the variety of opinions on the subject, the group accepted 'the scientific evidence in favour of the global or phrase method for teaching children to read' and on the basis of actual experience concerning adult psychology, it recommended the same method for adults 'until such time as the results of research and experiment indicate the contrary'.¹

In order to carry out such research in Cuba, it seemed to us necessary to comply with this recommendation and ascertain to what extent the methods and principles applied to children (so as to foster certain attitudes and habits and develop, in the same way, certain capacities) could apply to illiterate adults. We therefore drew up a plan of research for comparing global techniques with a synthetic technique and throwing light on the following questions:

1. To what extent does the greater logical capacity acquired by the mere process of living separate the illiterate adult from the small child whose mind is syncretic and favourable to global treatment?
2. Is the adult's visual discrimination greater or less than that of the child?
3. In the case of adults, which should serve as starting point, or which should be emphasized when visual observation is being trained—phrase or sentence, word, or syllable?
4. Is the association between symbols and sounds easiest for the adult when starting from the letter, syllable, word or sentence?
5. With adults, does the starting point of recognition include the product or result, as we know happens in the case of children?
6. With illiterate adults, should a synthetic or a global method of writing be used?

These were the problems posed at the beginning of our investigations; as they proceeded, new questions arose to which we shall refer later.

READING MATERIAL USED IN INQUIRY

In Cuba, there are books on the market to serve the three types of method we wished to apply—syllabic, global starting off with words, and global starting off with phrases and sentences. In spite of this, we preferred to create our own means, for the following reasons.

First, the inquiry was to take place on a national scale with the aid of teachers and students of the Education Institute of the University of Havana residing in different places, and we wished to prevent it being affected by questions of a commercial nature.

Secondly, we hoped that both the material for the global methods and that for the synthetic method would allow for a positive test as to the superiority of the idea and its interpretation, as opposed to the symbol and the mere emission of sounds. Moreover,

1. Carmela Tejada, *Inter-American Seminar on Adult Literacy and Education*, Rio de Janeiro, Washington, D.C., Pan-American Union, 1950, p. 23.

the material had to be sufficiently dynamic and capable of promoting specific associations and intellectual or emotional activity leading to the required attitudes for forming functional readers.

Thirdly, we wanted the reading units and their illustrations to respond to adult interests, so as to be able to start off from the latter for the preparatory work on the imagination and for motivation purposes.

The material used during the first four years of the inquiry was distributed to learners on loose pages or folded sheets. Teachers were instructed to preserve the collections in various envelopes. Distribution took a very considerable time, but made possible suitable control and direct and weekly contact with the teacher group and all necessary changes of practice and experiment in such cases.

The initial material was strictly adjusted to global methods (by words and sentences) used for teaching children.

Interim results obtained gave rise to significant alterations in the original teaching material until the final form of presentation of the three types of printed primers was reached in the fifth year of the inquiry.

PUPILS' CHARACTERISTICS

The illiterates forming the subject of the inquiry belong to both sexes and are over 14.

The technique is applied in two ways; by individual teaching and collective teaching. Those who apply the individual method seek out their own pupils. Moreover, individual action has contributed towards locating illiterate persons desirous of learning to read free of charge. In Cuba there are night schools for youths and adults, and in some of these schools we have used the classrooms of illiterates for collective teaching.

By the method of case study, applied at the initial stage (during the second, third or fourth week), the investigator gains a certain knowledge of the individual and of the conditions applying in each case, thus establishing the output coefficient with greater accuracy. There is also a mental test for determining the intelligence coefficient.

The time spent by the pupil in practising and personal revision, together with the number of classes and time employed by the teacher in reading instruction, are similarly recorded.

METHODS OF CONTROL AND CRITERIA OF EVALUATION

The 1943 population census in Cuba showed that 23.6 per cent of people, including children of 10 or over, were illiterate.

In view of the government's and country's interest in the massive spread of literacy, and relying on the enthusiasm and organizing ability of Dr. Blanca Rosa Urquiaga, Director-General of Rural Education (in Cuba, as in all other South American countries, the percentage of illiteracy is higher among the rural population), we thought of producing a general sample which would be more accurate for the purposes of the inquiry. The entire island could thus be converted into a field for the controlled application of methods. But owing to budget difficulties, it was finally decided to study a representative sample.¹

The various units were selected with great care so as to reflect certain precise characteristics: type of illiterate (absolute or as a result of neglect); intelligence quotient; sex; social environment—favourable, medium favourable, unfavourable; time spent in tasks; number of weekly tasks; time spent by pupil in personal practice, and teacher's qualities.

Teachers attached to the Educational Methodology Section (general and specialized

1. This sample, which was initially to have covered 10,000 illiterates, was finally reduced to half for economic reasons.

methods) of the Education Faculty of Havana University, school inspectors, principals, members of the College of Doctors in Pedagogics and the present writer took part in the work of supervision.

As the inquiry set out to determine the relative value of methods on a basis of the quality of readers they satisfy, the following aspects were specially considered: (a) reading aloud; (b) interpretation of text read; and (c) reaction—application or use of ideas; oral expression of personal ideas suggested by the text; changes in facial expression; emphasis or correct adaptation to the requirements of expressive reading, etc.

Practice subsequent to the apprenticeship stage was carried out with reading material prepared by OAS¹ and other material chosen by the teacher; once this second stage was completed, a series of tests was given in accordance with the following principles:

1. To determine progress made in each of the more important aspects of reading.
2. To measure this progress objectively.
3. To compare groups similar in mental ability, training, time spent in class and homework, length of teaching period; to employ teachers having the same amount of training and ability; and to use the same vocabulary, illustrations and type of material.
4. To ensure that the essential difference should lie in the teaching method or order in which the various parts of the lesson are presented.

These tests covered the following aspects of reading:

1. Recognition of 20 words included in the lessons during one year, and varying between those more and less commonly used.
2. Ability to pronounce a series of 20 words not taught in class, but which include nearly all the phonetic elements.
3. Ability to read aloud a passage of 50-100 words.
4. Speed in reading and comprehension of the literal meaning of a 100-word piece comparable in difficulty to the last part of the spelling book.
5. Greater or less ability to understand 40 questions, for measuring how far implied meanings have been seized.

The proficiency attained by pupils following different reading methods had to be compared separately in each of the tests. This showed the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods in each aspect of reading. A comparative analysis of their effectiveness was made as follows: (a) finding the percentage scale for each pupil in each of the tests; (b) finding the average percentage scale for each pupil in all the tests; (c) finding the average percentage scale for all pupils taught by a given method in each test and in all the tests put together.

TECHNIQUES APPLIED IN THE INQUIRY

Teachers taking part received instructions on how to teach reading before the classes began. This preliminary course comprised the more important aspects of such teaching together with the specific work of the seminar on adult literacy. (Subjects studied were: (a) Fundamental or mass education as advocated by Unesco; (b) The importance of literacy within the framework of fundamental education; (c) The illiterate adult and his social maladjustment; and (d) Global and synthetic methods of teaching literacy.)

We give below details of the three methods used in the inquiry.

Ideophonic Method

- (a) Motivation. Presenting the vowel sounds by means of illustrations, phenomena.
- (b) Motivation and preparation. Conversation tending to stimulate ideas connected with the illustration and the word that includes the consonant corresponding to the reading unit.
- (c) Reading of combinations of syllables in their logical order. Recogni-

1. See description of series entitled *Biblioteca Popular Latinoamericana*, p. 19.

tion of syllables. (d) Presenting the 'key word' that includes the sound. Reading the word. Formal phonetic exercises for breaking up the word and putting it together. (e) Forming and reading of new words. (f) Forming and reading of sentences.

Word Method

(a) Motivation. Presenting the vowels as above. (b) Motivation. Preparatory conversation with reference to the key word of the sentence to stimulate and give shape to ideas. (c) Presenting the word. Reading it. Breaking it up and putting it together until the sound is reached. (d) Forming of new syllables with the sound just learned. (e) Forming and reading of new words and sentences.

Sentence Method

(a) Motivation and presenting of vowels as above. (b) Motivation and illustration of ideas connected with the sentence read. (c) Presenting and fixing of the sentence. (d) Reading the sentence. Reading by sentences. Exercises for recognizing sentences. (e) Exercises for recognizing words. (f) Informal or formal phonetic exercises based on the words included in the sentence.

RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

We should make it clear that the number of cases dealt with so far does not entitle one to regard the results as definitive. However, we think a knowledge of them may be useful for improving the present educational methods adopted in teaching illiterate adults how to read. They can moreover be compared with the results obtained by others who, like ourselves, have carried out the final recommendation made by the reading group of the Inter-American Seminar held in Brazil in 1949.

Illiterate adults from samples situated in a favourable environment tend to look for the letter spontaneously and to rely on it for recognizing words.

At the beginning of the inquiry, the sentence method was applied in the way it is used with children of primary grade. Teachers found that adults had difficulty in memorizing the sentences included in the reading unit.¹

The sentence method was changed at later stages and presents the following characteristics, differing in certain cases from those of the same method when applied to children.

Adults

- (a) Reading requires preparation.
- (b) Reading must include activities for stimulating and clarifying ideas, which can and must, in certain cases, go beyond the limited contents of the page units, although based on them.
- (c) Intelligent reading and phonetic exercises must be included from the initial units onwards as soon as the vowels have been studied and mastered.

Children

Greater preparation needed than for average illiterate adults.
Reading must include activities for widening and clarifying ideas connected with the reading unit.

Intelligent reading and phonetic exercises must come later, when the child can recognize a group of sentences and 40 or more words in them.

1. It should be pointed out that, although this inquiry was based at the beginning on the supposition that adolescent and illiterate adult minds differ from that of the child (whose perception is syncretic), this supposition was only entertained so as not to include 'unseen' reading exercises such as are carried out with children until they have a vocabulary of 40 or more words.

The adult's visual discrimination is greater than the child's, but a child's retention of visual forms in global recognition is superior.

It is not advisable to concern oneself with phonic exercises based on consonantal sounds. When you start from a sentence and carry out the preparatory work for arousing interest and stimulating ideas, reading results are of higher quality. It does not matter if, in the final exercises corresponding to the reading units, word, media and key are reduced to their component parts for the purpose of phonic and recognition exercises; the idea and its interpretation continue to govern the contact with the reading material.

The method based on sentences gives higher quality results, but it cannot be the same in structure and development as that used with children. After presenting and reading the unit and before arriving at the recognition and reading of words and sentences thanks to examples based on a complete image of them, it is more effective to include the exercise of phonetics, which brings out the new element, and not bother about the isolated pronunciation of the consonantal sound that in the material appears framed in a square simply in order to serve for exercises in visual discrimination.

Short phrases and sentences are better for teaching adults.

Methods of stimulation must be thoroughly applied when dealing with adults suffering from handicaps that impede learning.

Adults show a desire to learn how to write as soon as they begin to read.

Teachers in charge of adults must study each individual case. The effort made in remembering and applying must not be greater or less than what is suitable for the individual concerned.

Adult illiterates prefer individual to collective teaching.

Collective teaching is more successful where the groups are homogeneous.

There should not be mixed groups of children and adults if this can be avoided. Where

this is impossible, it is best to separate them in the reading and the writing classes.

The words included in the reading material must be taken from what is regarded as the basic vocabulary.

Certain methods and principles followed in the preparation of reading material for children are not applicable when designing spelling books or reading material for adults.

The preliminary work connected with each of the units must be carried out in such a way as to hold the child's interest in the reading material and, furthermore, form a basis for the new ideas and experiences toward which the unit leads.

It is advisable that the reading unit contain some new and significant idea for the adult, in addition to the phonic problem with which it deals. Units containing material without difficulties of the first type—for example, 'Tomasa kneads the dough', 'The dough is on the table', 'The table and the dough are Tomasa's', or 'Mrs. Pérez prepares the meal', 'Mrs. Pérez goes to market', 'Mr. Pérez goes to work'—please mechanical readers. In order to develop the attitude proper to a functional reader, that is to say, *approaching written matter in search of ideas that will govern a subsequent reaction*, the material must present difficulties that can of course be overcome, but of two types: those connected with phonic problems, and those connected with a progressive development of the idea and thought.

There is no doubt that children's readers deal with subjects that may seem puerile to the adult, but which nevertheless reflect the child's life and his liveliest and most significant interests—favourite animals, toys, home, parents, games, food, etc. And it is the school which, later on, will set him on the road to widening his horizon and at the same time his experiences.

Adults feel resentful if made to read babyish or rather silly questions; the more able and intelligent among them (a good many illiterates are in this category) get rather discouraged and come to look on reading simply from its mechanical aspect. This is of course reflected in the final results. It follows that the *attitude* to be developed

so as to produce good readers must be regarded by the teacher as just as important and dynamic an objective as the mastery of the phonic problems connected with the language.

The preliminary work for clarifying ideas and widening experiences should be given special attention and, although the vocabulary considered as basic has to be used, ideas transmitted must correspond to adult needs and interests. Even when it is a question of a reader, the written page must contain *ideas* in order to be able to form *ideas*. It is in these initial contacts that one must begin to mould the functional reader, so that he may come to regard reading as a means and not in any sense as an end.

Each reading unit should contain phonic problems of a definite type or category, together with words and material for application and practice. The difficulties to be overcome, as far as the progressive development of ideas and thought just referred to is concerned, can and must be fewer than the phonic problems connected with the language. The attitude developed by such efforts can be ensured by means of complementary material.

The logical arrangement of the contents of readers and an appropriate restriction of the problems or questions included in each unit make for a more satisfactory understanding in each case on the part of the illiterate person and for a feeling that his efforts to master reading are rewarded.

The adult illiterate, whose judgement is better than the child's, is able to size up his work and is keenly alive to the progress he is making or the want of it. Reading material should be graded according to the difficulties involved. Spelling books corresponding to the three methods limit the questions within each unit. The first unit gives the vowels; the second, the vowels already mastered in combination with a new element, the letter *m*; the third, the vowels and combinations with both *m* and *s* as the new sound element, and so on.

With adults, this strict sequence appears to be necessary. So far in the inquiry nothing permits us to assume an identity between the way a child learns and the way an adult does. Indeed, the latter turns aside from a global or collective form of observation and understanding and tends to seek out and identify points of reference for seizing upon elements through analysis. The illiterate adult's worry is the letter. Having acquired more experience and greater discriminatory ability, he moves toward analysis and carries it out more effectively.

An adult with reasonable ability for reading learns to do so faster than a child of comparable condition. His attention is more sustained and his aim more definite. Consequently, wider and more comprehensive reading programmes are necessary for adult classes than for children's.

For a literacy campaign, more than one type of spelling book is needed. There must be different spelling books or materials for use by untrained teachers and for an individual type of teaching, for medium trained teachers, and for well trained teachers.

So far, results have been in favour of the sentence method. Despite this, the other methods have not been dropped, though necessary changes have been made in them to improve results.

One of the questions investigated was teachers' preferences in the matter. Their choice went to the word method rather than to the sentence or ideophonic methods. In the reports on the application of the method in its original form, the results showed a high percentage of mechanical readers, although the contents were similar to those of the sentence method. Fresh instructions for its application were therefore given with the object of improving results. Teachers were recommended to intensify the preliminary work for clarifying and stimulating new and individual ideas based on illustration, so as to introduce the word object for the building up and breaking down exercises necessary to bring out the new phonic element. They were further recommended to make such exercises short, so as to pass immediately to the reading

of sentences that reiterate the key word and the combinations already learnt.

The ideophonic method in the third spelling book uses a modified synthetic technique so as to recommend it to untrained teachers, and for teaching those who have become illiterate through neglect but started to learn by purely synthetic techniques such as the ABC method. The results of the inquiry show that this method takes less time than the word method and is more easily applied. Certain teachers have mentioned cases where illiterates, after mastering various reading units, have been able to study subsequent lessons by themselves, relying on the pictorial illustration as key to the new sound. The results of this method in its original form were not so good as for the other two; but it has been modified and has ceased to be purely syllabic. It now starts with the syllable and does not allude to the name or sound of the consonants, which are only included so as to assist visual discrimination. However, as with the two previous methods, subsequent practice is based on sentences, and in the preliminary work the same form is adopted to serve identical objectives. With adults, synthetic methods of handwriting give better results than global, but it should be noted that this assertion is based on mere observation. We do not yet know the results of the controlled investigation with sample groups carried out during the seventh year of the inquiry (1956), in which specially printed and prepared materials were used.

TYPES OF HANDWRITING

A report sent in by one of the study groups of the regional seminar on education in Latin America, held in Caracas in 1948, contains a recommendation on the teaching of handwriting to illiterate adults taking place simultaneously with that of reading and use of cursive script.

Bearing in mind the limited value of the observations made, for reasons already given, we nevertheless refer to them so as to complete this aspect of the report:

1. The majority of illiterates prefer cursive to script writing.
2. Where it was decided to employ script, this resulted in clearer handwriting.
3. Adults pass easily from script to cursive style.
4. The simultaneous practice of reading and writing and having the whole of the reading unit copied out has been found to have a discouraging effect on certain adults in the initial stages.
5. The separation of reading and writing during the first weeks so as to follow a synthetic method, and afterwards correlating both subjects by copying out short examples, has produced better results than those obtained by global methods.

Despite the already mentioned limitations of this inquiry, we hope that the summary of observations given here may be of some use to those interested in teaching adults literacy, or at any rate contribute to the exchange of experiences between the Associated Projects.

UNESCO ASSOCIATED PROJECTS—XIII: ADULT EDUCATION CAMPAIGN IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF NIGERIA

MALLAM AHMADU COOMASSIE

When the literacy drive was started in Nigeria in 1946, with only one expatriate officer to supervise the work, little was known of the latent desire of the people to learn to read and write. The first pilot schemes were immediately followed by many classes which sprang up like mushrooms, sporadically opened by various local authorities. The campaign gradually caught people's imagination and interest. They grew eager to learn to read and write not so much for the value to their daily lives but because they were proud to be classified among the literate members of the community.

There are interesting stories connected with the early stages of the campaign. There was the case of a village where some youths formed their own society and refused to admit anyone who was illiterate. There was another case of some women in a small village who, having seen a neighbouring village nicely laid out with communal roads, threatened to leave their husbands unless they too could attend a literacy class so as to become 'qualified' for a better laid out village. For they had been told whenever they saw a well laid out village that it was because people in the village were literate. In fact 'literacy' became one of the three prime requisites in a village: these were *Bicycle, Literacy, Wife*.

The campaign assumed a new look in 1952. The North Regional Government appointed what is now known as the Yakin Jahilci (War against Ignorance) Committee, to make suggestions for the stepping up of the campaign which, in addition to the literacy drive, should embrace all aspects of adult education work, namely: provision of literature in the main local languages; production of suitable visual aids as a means of public enlightenment; effective distribution services; and production of suitable methods for the newly literate to learn English.

Expert expatriate officers were seconded for the work from various government departments to carry out the recommendations of the Yakin Jahilci Committee. The machinery was then put into operation.

THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The literacy campaign has since formed one of the sections of the adult education campaign, with its scope extended and its achievements consolidated. In 1954 about 48,000 people in the region were made literate and at this rate it is expected that the output will eventually be about 50,000 each year. It is therefore imperative to make active preparation for the provision of follow-up literature.

Primers and class books for the literacy classes, are being produced, and about 20 languages are covered. Thanks to the survey conducted by the Unesco expert, Dr. Hans Wolff, common orthographies have been established and are being used in the production of literature.

The literacy statistics are interesting. Whereas there were only some 500 classes in 1946 with a total enrolment of about 12,500, there are now more than 5,000 classes with about 125,000 adults learning to read and write.

PRODUCTION OF LITERATURE

The production of literature of all kinds has gone on apace. With the setting up of this section, vernacular editors are from time to time being seconded from the various

Native Administrations, and their job is to edit and produce special reading sheets for their respective areas. They are also employed in the translation of suitable literature into the vernaculars. There are at present 13 such reading sheets which supplement the 'mother reading sheet', known as Jakadiya, which is in Hausa and covers the whole region. Their names embody current terms and include:

<i>Local name</i>	<i>English meaning</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Present run</i>
Jakadiya	Female attendant	Hausa	32,000
Albishir	Good news	Kanuri	2,800
Himma	Zeal	Hausa	7,000
Zaruma	Courageous woman	Hausa	28,000
Ardo	Leader	Fulani	6,000
Bazzaga	That of Zaria	Hausa	3,400
Durosi-Oto	Stand for truth	Yoruba	14,000
Mwangular U Tiv	Tiv Star	Tiv	3,600
Gamzaki	Morning Star	Hausa	2,200
Zumunta	Clan feeling	Hausa	1,000
Nna Nyintsu	Mother of the King	Nupe	2,000
Okia K'Idoma	Idoma news	Idoma and English	1,000

The other two are Sogandi (Hausa) of Kano, and Igala Parrot (Igala and English) of Idah, which are printed locally.

A new periodical, *Nasiha*, devoted to religious and moral subjects in support of the drive for better public and private morals, has made its debut, and is expected to have a very big circulation.

In addition to the reading sheets and primers, much general reading matter is being produced. This consists of 16- to 30-page booklets priced at 1d. to 3d. The popular ones sell rapidly and have had to be reprinted several times. The sales vary from 5,000 to well over 100,000. The Hausa primer has now reached one and a half million copies.

The use of 'Ajami' script (Arabic characters but native language) has attracted many buyers. A series of booklets, giving Arabic and Roman script on opposite pages, has proved very popular. Thousands of people are literate in Arabic Ajami (7.5 per cent in the northern region according to the 1952 census) but have felt they were considered illiterate in the modern sense. They have been greatly encouraged to find books they can read and from which they can teach themselves modern reading and writing.

(Photo North Regional Literature Agency, Nigeria)



Buying books from a Norla Mobile Bookshop in the northern region of Nigeria.

A Nigerian reading a copy of the Zaria periodical for new literates.



(Photo North Regional Literature Agency, Nigeria)

Broadsheets on various subjects have been prepared in collaboration with government departments. They include: 'Treatment of snake bite', 'Care of teeth', 'Leprosy', 'Blindness', 'Care of cattle', and so on. These are issued free with the reading sheets and provide fresh periodical reading matter containing information of value to readers.

THE USE OF ENGLISH

That there is a demand for English among the new literates is certain, and this is being met by the English Research Section. The *English by Radio* series, suitably adapted, is broadcast twice a week over the Kaduna Broadcasting Service. The series has been put into book form, with slight modifications and translations in the main vernaculars, for the benefit of pupils who want to learn on their own. These books are supplemented by the following:

The Dictionary of English Conversation. This gives copious examples of the use of about 1,500 item words, and contains 324 pictures of different objects. Translations—English to vernacular and vernacular to English—are in hand.

The Leader. A monthly reading sheet in simple English. It contains short stories, puzzles, an English Study Page, historical and geographical features, etc.

English Notebook. A programme for more advanced listeners to the Nigerian Broadcasting Service. Scripts of the 'English Study Page', 'Thirty-nine Steps', 'Treasure Island', etc.

Wall charts for oral English.

The World (and its Hausa version, *Alfijir*). This is a monthly magazine for those who wish to improve their English and their general knowledge.

Other publications, as an aid to learn English, are in course of preparation, and will include: articles on food, health, science; summaries of well-known adventure stories; exercises in English idiom; vocabulary books, etc.

VISUAL AIDS

Instructional filmstrips have been produced by this Section in collaboration with the Colonial Film Unit. So far 20 have been produced with the following titles: *Women's*

Our Readers' Views

THE editors want to know your views. With a readership as dispersed and varied as that of the bulletin, the task of finding out readers' needs—and satisfying them—is especially difficult. We do not pretend that readers' needs or wishes are the only consideration in determining the policy of the bulletin. After all, our main aim is to further the policy of Unesco and its Member States with regard to fundamental and adult education. But the accurate assessment of your reactions, your needs, is an essential part of the process of making and carrying out that policy.

So let us hear from you. We do not promise to print what you write, but we shall pay close attention to it, even if it is only 100 words on a postcard. And we shall acknowledge receipt of it.

If you have strong views about any aspect of the bulletin, tell us about them. If not, why not start by telling us what you think about the problem raised in the 'Open Forum' of this issue?

Classes in the Plateau, Parts 1 and 2; Mothers' Class; Cotton in Northern Nigeria; Argungu Fishing Festival; Baby Clinic; Welfare Clinic; Hassan and Husaini; Ginger Market in Zaria; Soldier's Life (in collaboration with the Army); Scenes from Sokoto; Flannelgraph on Bilharzia; A Day in Kano; A Day in Katsina; Yellow Fever Vaccine; Pharmacy School, Zaria; Audu was a Leper; Police College, Parts 1 and 2; Zaria Sugar. Enlarged photographs of most of the above are being produced for display in reading rooms and adult education centres.

A picture book on *Road Accidents and Their Avoidance* has been prepared in collaboration with the Nigeria Police. In spite of its subject it is a most attractive book, and gives examples of the use that can be made for instructional purposes of serial photographs of models.

The Section is compiling a cultural 'grid' of photographic reference material. This consists, in the first instance, of sets of photographs to illustrate the significant cultures that are the traditional heritage of the various people in the region. It is realized that, unless this is done now, the information may well be lost, and that when, after some years of educational progress, local interest is taken in community history, this collection may prove of very great value. The immediate uses of the grid are to provide (a) material for teaching people about their neighbours within the region, as an aspect of public enlightenment, and (b) references for artists so that illustrations may be authentic and convincing to general readers. About 1,000 photographs have already been registered.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISTRIBUTION SERVICES

The Distribution Section is responsible for the purchase, storage, sale and dispatch of all these productions, as well as the productions of other publishers for which there is a demand, and such necessary stationery items as pens, pencils, ink, rubbers, rulers, exercise books, notebooks, etc.

One activity of this Section is the training of staff to deal with mail order business, Mission and Native Authority bookshops, sundry traders, mobile bookshops (12 are on order for each province in the region), and static bookshops throughout the region in important towns and villages.

THE NORTH REGIONAL LITERATURE AGENCY

When the Yakin Jahilci made its recommendations, all the sections mentioned above were working under the Adult Education set-up, but because of the increasing volume of business in selling, printing and distributing literature, it has become necessary to create a new organization to deal specially with the work. On 1 April 1954 a new body, known as the North Regional Literature Agency (NORLA) came into being. It is headed by a Director, on the lines of the Publications Bureau of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and has taken over all the production units of the Adult Education Headquarters including the Literature Production Section (now known as the Publishing and Editorial Section), the Distribution Section, the Visual Aids and the English Research Sections. Adult Education Headquarters now has to deal with the literacy campaign, post-literacy work and public enlightenment. Additionally, it has also become one of the customers of NORLA for such services as are essential for literacy, post-literacy and public enlightenment.

PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT

A number of discussion scripts have been prepared using the question and answer methods. It is hoped that, by the progressive development of technique in controlled

Open Forum

It can now be said that the need for literacy is universally recognized. But, as the articles in this issue illustrate, the role of literacy in a country's development is still the subject of controversy. We print below two quotations which seem to us clear statements of different points of view on this issue. Do these points of view contradict each other? Or are they complementary views of one and the same process which may be reconciled with each other?

We invite our readers to tell us what they think.

'We want to put bookselling on an ordinary commercial basis as soon as may be because we believe that the test of sales is a sound test and that ordinary trade is good: we are speeding up a normal process, not initiating a grand abnormal project.'

Quoted from official sources by Professor Margaret Read in 'Some Aspects of Adult Education', *Community Development Bulletin*, Vol. III, No. 3, June 1952.

'If we lay emphasis on hard work and voluntary labour in the Community Project areas on the one hand and continue to educate our children in the old bookish fashion, our developmental programme would be a house divided against itself. The necessary atmosphere for development and hard work could be brought about only if we make our educational system work-centred rather than book-centred.'

Shrinan Narayan, M.P., in the *Kurukshetra*, monthly organ of the Community Projects Administration, India Republic Day Number, 26 January 1956.

discussion groups, discussion may come to play a valuable part in community development at the local government level, and that uninformed argument may prove unacceptable to people made familiar with the true purpose and method of discussion. One advantage of the discussion method is that the group members take part in the proceedings and are not subjected to 'lectures'. At present the series is experimental in form. When the scripts have been revised, full kits will be prepared to include scripts, wall charts and pictures, a filmstrip, and, in some cases, a gramophone record.

The newly appointed Provincial Adult Education Officers have been issued with the scripts, and the experiment under observation is being made by the Provincial Adult Education Officer in Zaria Province who arranged filmstrip shows and discussions at 26 places between November 1954 and March 1955. He has brought back many valuable suggestions, and interesting sidelights which illuminate the degree of ignorance that has to be fought. He has been impressed by the obvious enjoyment of the discussions and by the shrewdness of many questions asked. The subjects for which scripts have been provided so far are: Rabies; The tsetse fly; Smallpox; Mosquitoes; Tapeworms; Cerebro-spinal meningitis; Relapsing fever; Tuberculosis; Money and banks; Rinderpest; Pleuro-pneumonia; Trypanosomiasis; Sleeping sickness; Leprosy; Malaria; Disentery; Bilharzia; Guinea worm; What trees and plants live on; Fruit and flowers; How your tax money is spent; Pests of the cotton; Pests of Dawa; Wutawuta and the smuts; Presents: customary and illegal; The police; Native Authorities; Drinking water; Hookworm; The earthworm; Cement, mortar and concrete; District Councils; The citizen and the law; Cotton cultivation in northern Nigeria; The bollworms and cotton stainer; Thrift and credit society; The co-operative village shop; The Producers' Co-operative Society; Forest reserves.

The scripts in their final form will be submitted to departmental experts before general publication. Many already have been, and many are based on material specially supplied by the government departments.

Talks have been given, once per week throughout the year by members of Adult Education and NORLA headquarters staff to all the Local Government Courses that have been held at the Institute of Administration. It is hoped, in this way, that some understanding of the purpose and means of adult education, and some willingness to take an active part in the programme for public enlightenment, may be planted in all corners of the region. With this in view, one talk has already been given at the Nigerian College, and a full series is being planned.

An interesting experiment was made in co-operation with the Veterinary Department while immunization camps were in operation in Southern Zaria. A Fulani instructor from Adawama (himself the product of a Literacy Class) was given the opportunity to try to interest Fulani herdsmen in literacy. Initial response was, not unexpectedly, disappointing. Classes were held at various immunization centres during the season with a reasonable amount of success and with an encouraging amount of goodwill on the part of the Fulanis themselves. Many who attended classes at Zangon Katab wished to follow the unit to Kubacha to continue their schooling. Conclusions drawn from the experiment are: (a) Fulanis will respond if tackled in the right way; they are shrewd enough to see where the advantage lies. (b) They have faith in veterinary methods of cattle immunization and are likely to look favourably on new ideas that come their way through their established contacts with the Veterinary Departments. (c) They are reluctant to let their children go to school, as this interferes with herding and traditional 'cattle education', and schoolchildren tend to drift away from traditional ways of life. There is no objection, however, to useful education for those who already have a stake in their cattle, and possess maturity of mind.

A Fulani 'Development Centre' is planned for Southern Zaria with adult education classes and activities as integral parts. The Immunization Unit would then serve as a propaganda unit contacting the Fulani over a wide area and directing their attention to wider aspects of public enlightenment and the facilities provided at the Centre.

THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE CAMPAIGN

Mention must be made of the possibility of posting an experienced Woman Education Officer to the Adult Education Headquarters. The posting is expected to take place very soon and the interests of women will then be more adequately served. At present about 7,000 women are learning reading and writing in mixed classes and in a few classes exclusively for women. The instructors are in most cases men, but a start has been made in the training of some women.

The women's section of the government education department has been dealing with girls who have completed their junior primary course and have not been able to continue their education. Classes are being formed for these girls so that they can be taught simple domestic subjects such as housekeeping, mothercraft, cooking and crafts, etc. When a Woman Education Officer is attached to the Adult Education Headquarters she will have to encourage this kind of work, not only among girls but also among the illiterate wives of the upper classes (wives of local chiefs, councillors, senior members of native administrations, etc.). She will encourage and organize women societies on the lines of the Women's Institutes in England.

NOTES AND RECORDS

AFRICA

ITALIAN SOMALILAND—FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION OF NOMADS

The education of the nomadic peoples of Somalia—over 900,000 out of a total population of 1,263,000—presents a special challenge of a kind not encountered before by Unesco missions in the field. Mr. Ludwig Zöhrer (Austria) who has been in the country since March 1956, and heads AUNEP (the joint AFIS-Unesco Nomad Education Project¹) recently reported on some of the problems of his work. The bush people of Somalia live over a wide area of extremely hard and inhospitable country where, for centuries, they have been secluded from the outside world. Not only are they unacquainted with many simple tools and techniques but the monotonous regularity of their lives, unchanged in the smallest detail over the years, appears to have numbed both their curiosity about innovations and the keenness of their perceptive faculties. Since life is extremely precarious, depending in large measure upon the availability of water, the nomads are fully preoccupied with matters of immediate urgency. They must therefore be trained to take an interest in anything that requires effort sustained over a period of time, or the advantages of which are not, at first sight, applicable to a narrow range of familiar routines.

AUNEP's work is thus being organized in two stages. The first stage is no more than an approach to nomad people in the Basso Juba region of southern Somalia, designed to acquaint them with the mission's presence and to gain their confidence and sympathy. This is being undertaken with the goodwill of local chieftains, alive to the possibilities of improving their peoples' lot. The mission's two roving jeeps are becoming well-known in the area, and their passage is welcomed since they bring new films, papers and sometimes medical supplies to relieve the boredom and distress of isolated tribes. A teacher who acts as scribe, and a medical dresser, both Somalis, generally accompany the jeeps, which also act as the only speedy link with the town of Chisimaio from which they operate. This first stage can now be considered well advanced and largely successful.

The second stage of the work consists in the

establishment of a number of regular bush centres. Two of these have already been started, one at Afmadu, an important watering-place about 115 kilometres north of Chisimaio, and the other at Goba, the commercial centre of an immense grazing and watering area 130 kilometres west of Chisimaio. Equipment, storage space and accommodation for meetings is available at both centres. Tents have been supplied by Unesco to shelter AUNEP staff members, and a time-table is being made known which forecasts the presence of AUNEP personnel on certain days to enable nomads from the hinterland to arrange to meet them. Though not yet begun, it is envisaged that a few simple lessons in reading, writing and other school subjects may later be given, but for the time being the activities even of the bush centres is to be restricted to the making of contacts, to help and to advise in strictly practical, everyday problems. The ultimate aims of AUNEP, however, are directed towards assisting the nomads to achieve social and economic progress by implanting a certain desire for improvement amongst them through fundamental education, the spread of literacy and the organization of film shows, lectures, discussion groups and sports in connexion with work, health and hygiene campaigns. Mr. Zöhrer, in his further trips through the bush, will also attempt to impress upon the nomad peoples the need for and the benefits of education. He will study the possibility of sending out mobile schools modelled on those already familiar and will give particular attention to the education of girls and women. This last objective involves overcoming parental objections rooted in aged-old customs.

AUNEP's activities are at all stages closely co-ordinated with the work of the Italian Trusteeship Administration in the same or related fields. Progress, however, must be expected to be slow, partly because it is impossible to reach large groups of people at any one time. The Somali nomads usually move in small family groups comprising no more than eight or ten individuals, and contact will have to be made and maintained with as many of these as possible as they pass from one watering and grazing ground to another.

1. AFIS; The Italian Trusteeship Administration in Somalia.

ASIA

ASIAN LIBRARIES AND ASIAN CHILDREN

I. Public Libraries for Asia; The Delhi Seminar. This volume, the seventh in the series of *Unesco Public Library Manuals*, contains a selection of the papers of the Unesco Seminar on the Development of Public Libraries in Asia held in Delhi, India, in October 1955. Included are contributions from experts in 10 countries and reports and recommendations established by 46 specialists during three intensive weeks in Delhi.

This seminar was somewhat special in that it was the first all-Asia meeting on public library development ever to be held and also because the meeting took place at the Delhi Public Library, a Government of India-Unesco pilot project which is the busiest public library in the whole continent.

The contributions to this book pinpoint the main problems of public library development in the region and propose practical solutions. Included are chapters on the national organization of public library services, planning public library buildings, the provision of easy-to-read publications and suitable audio-visual material for adults who have had little or no formal education, and the organization of services for children in public libraries and schools. Public library statistics for 20 Asian countries are also given.

This book will be of particular value to anybody concerned with public library development in Asia and, since public library problems are much the same in many parts of the world, it can be read with profit by librarians and educators in other countries as well.

II. First Assessment of Public Library Work. A new publication of interest to educators as well as to librarians and social scientists is *The Delhi Public Library: An Evaluation Report*, by Frank M. Gardner. This volume, the eighth in the series of *Unesco Public Library Manuals*, is a record of the first full-scale assessment of an Asian public library ever made.

The library surveyed was established in 1951 by the Government of India and Unesco as a model for public library development in Asia. Now the busiest public library in the region, it serves over 70,000 men, women and children a month and during the past four years has lent 1,600,000 books.

The report gives a detailed picture of what the library is doing, what it has achieved so far and the problems it is likely to meet in the future. It also shows what the average member

is like and to what uses he applies his reading. This candid portrait was built up from answers provided to 40 questions in 1,300 interviews of Delhi users and non-users of the library, from an analysis of the library's registration, records and from observation.

The main work of evaluation was done by the Delhi School of Social Work, the staff of the Delhi Public Library and the author of this book, Mr. Frank M. Gardner, Borough Librarian of Luton (U.K.) who served as a Unesco consultant in Delhi from November 1951 to June 1952 and again in the autumn of 1955.

These two books can be purchased in local currency through Unesco national distributors. If there is no distributor in your country, they can be obtained directly from: Unesco Sales Service, 19 avenue Kléber, Paris-16e.

III. Books for Asian Children. A selective list of publications from world literature suitable for use in Asia, in the original, in translation or in adaptation, has been compiled for Unesco by Shakuntala Bhatawdekar, formerly children's librarian of the Delhi Public Library.

This annotated list of approximately 500 books is intended primarily as a basic buying guide to foreign children's books for Asian public and school libraries. It should also be of considerable use to teachers and will, it is hoped, assist Asian governments and publishers in selecting publications to be translated or adapted.

Books for Asian Children was prepared in response to a recommendation made by the Unesco Seminar on Public Library Development in Asia held in Delhi in October 1955. The seminar stressed the need for such a list in view of the shortage of suitable books for children in many Asian countries.

Most of the work of compiling the list was done at the International Youth Library in Munich, a Unesco Associated Project, which has an unusual collection of children's books from 40 countries.

Copies of *Books for Asian Children* may be obtained free from the Libraries Division of Unesco, 19 avenue Kléber, Paris-16e, France.

EUROPE

WORKERS' EDUCATION IN ECONOMICS

The Yugoslav National Commission, in co-operation with Unesco within the framework of the Aid to Member States Programme, organized a seminar on workers' education in economics which was held at Rijeka (formerly

Fiume) from 17 to 28 September and at Zagreb from 28 to 30 September 1956.

The Commission had invited representatives of some twenty European and extra-European countries of divergent social structures, economic development and systems of government. In doing this it had several ends in view. In pursuance of the aims of Unesco, the Commission sought to provoke an exchange of ideas and information on the chosen subject with a view to promoting mutual understanding and to overcoming certain harmful preconceptions caused by ignorance which hinder understanding and co-operation between different peoples and political systems. It hoped that this large-scale meeting between accredited representatives would establish the complex nature of economic education, bearing in mind its social, technical and political context and likewise its relationship with kindred subjects. It seemed desirable also to list and explain the teaching methods suited to this subject. Finally, the Commission, aware of the importance and the special character of Yugoslav achievements in establishing a democratic form of management and control, purposely chose for the seat of the seminar Rijeka, a town in which it was felt it would be possible for delegates to obtain first-hand information on the various institutions of Yugoslav society.

The balance obtained between the countries represented may be considered satisfactory. (Of the 45 participants at the seminar, excluding the 15 Yugoslav experts, half were drawn from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and People's Democracies and the other half from countries of Western Europe.¹) The presence of delegates from Asian countries, and of a Moroccan expert, afforded an opportunity to consider experiments that are now being carried out in parts of the world where workers' education is still in its infancy. In the main, the national delegations were made up of highly qualified persons holding important positions in the movements to which they adhere.

The Director of the Seminar was Mr. Asher Déleon, in charge of education and press in the Central Committee of Yugoslav Trade Unions. Mr. Déleon, who represented his country at the first seminar on workers' education, held at La Brévière in 1952, and has since taken part as an expert at all the sessions of the Unesco Consultative Committee on Adult Education, was particularly well qualified for his task. He was assisted by a management committee, composed of the three group leaders and an expert representing the Unesco Secretariat. The latter was elected rapporteur of the seminar.

The choice of Yugoslavia as seat of a seminar of this nature was a particularly happy one. Informed opinion the world over is aware of the remarkable experiments carried out in that country with a view to decentralizing economic administration to the greatest possible degree and handing over the management of businesses and social institutions to workers' councils. Moreover, Yugoslavia occupies today a central position between the two chief political *blocs*, thanks to the cordial relations that she maintains with both of them and to the structure of her society which is a compromise between the different forms of democracy. This position makes Yugoslavia a perfect choice for meetings of this sort.

The seminar first discussed the meaning and importance of education in economics, and arrived at the conclusion that all the citizens of a country, and not merely a minority of experts and technicians, need economic education. The modern conception of a citizen implies his participation not only in politics or administration, but in economic management also. Moreover, the organization of production, the development of productivity and the effective participation of workers in the various managerial bodies, make economic education for all still more imperative. Finally, the knowledge and mastery of economic facts are considered to be essential elements of modern humanism and a living culture.

The seminar agreed, further, that the education of workers, under no matter what system of government, had common objectives. This finding can be considered to mark a distinct advance on the positions initially adopted by the different delegations, some of whom viewed workers' education as essentially a training for class warfare, as in capitalist régimes, while others saw it as training for management by the workers, as in socialist countries. The argument that workers of all countries, highly developed or underdeveloped, whether capitalist, socialist or a mixture of the two, were required to face up to similar problems soluble only by a similar educational effort shaped by the experience of each country, found unanimous acceptance by the seminar.

The discussion led also to definitions of the content of economic education, of its relation to general culture, and to kindred or closely associated subjects, like sociology, history, philosophy, geography, etc., and of the rela-

1. Austria, Belgium, Burma, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Italy, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yugoslavia.

tions between the empirical and the systematic forms of economic education. Attention was called to the obstacles, both internal (inherent in the nature and difficulty of the subject), and external (living and working conditions), which impede the development of the study of economics, and examined methods of overcoming them.

The seminar paid close attention to the question of methods. Two general statements and much discussion were devoted to this matter. Whereas in some countries active and functional methods have long been employed, it appeared that many other countries, which are looked upon in some respects as innovators, still cling to traditional, not to say antiquated methods of teaching. The abundance of ideas and information exchanged on this topic revealed to many delegates the methodological shortcomings of their teaching programmes. Public indifference towards education is not always or necessarily a sign of apathy, but is largely due to the failure to adapt teaching methods to the psychological make-up and mental attributes of the groups concerned. It was recognized that this failing was a basic obstacle to workers' education and that it encouraged dogmatic attitudes which needed combating. This being so, delegates showed much interest in information about and demonstrations of active teaching methods, ways of forming and stimulating study groups, and the use of different forms of debate. This methodological aspect of the problem was stressed in the seminar's final report.

In order to give practical illustrations of what the meetings had discussed, delegates were enabled to visit local institutions and see for themselves some of the prototypes which constitute the special interest of the Yugoslav experiment. Conversations were arranged at the headquarters of businesses and committees, with different managerial bodies, such as the People's Provincial Committee, the Manufacturers' Council, the managing boards of large- and medium-sized industrial and commercial firms, the Management Committee of Social Insurance, and housing committees. The delegates showed keen interest in the work accomplished by these bodies which furnished materials for much useful comparison.

At the close of the seminar a report was drawn up on the plenary discussions. This document, which recorded the progress made during the work of the seminar, formulates a

set of findings which make an important contribution to the subject studied. On the basis of these conclusions workers' education in economics may be directed along new channels, with beneficial results in the years to come.

Viewed in this light, the Rijeka seminar had undoubtedly an educational value. It also proved that communities and individuals who, from lack of knowledge and means of communication, believed that they stood far apart and looked upon each other, if not as enemies, at least as strangers, actually cherish the same ideas and share the same preoccupations.

UNIVERSITIES AND ADULT EDUCATION

Unesco has given financial and technical support to the organization of a Seminar on Universities and Adult Education under the leadership of Professor Ross Waller (United Kingdom). The seminar was organized by the United Kingdom National Commission for Unesco and took place at Bangor, North Wales, from 1 to 15 September. It was attended by 45 participants from 14 countries.¹

The participants reviewed the present situation as to the place of universities in adult education. They concentrated on the tasks of universities (a) as centres for extra-mural work and (b) as research centres in the field of adult education. Comparisons were made between the situation in the United Kingdom and in the continental countries of Europe and North America, and the future development in parts of the world where adult education is now starting to grow was discussed. Four working groups were in action during the course of the seminar, discussing on the one hand organizational, financial and administrative problems, and on the other hand, problems of programmes, methods and techniques. A number of specialists presented the problems in lectures and acted as group leaders.

A number of interesting conclusions were reached which may prove of practical value for future development and stimulate a more active participation of universities in adult education in different parts of the world.

1. Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Eire, France, Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Yugoslavia.

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CONTENTS

Editorial: The Scope and Nature of Fundamental Education	51
Education and Community Development: Some Recent Trends in Africa, by Lionel Elvin	59
Co-operation and Integration in Community Development: Brazilian Experience, by José Arthur Ríos	66
Some Observations on the Fundamental Education Team, by Conrad Opper .	72
The Rio Coco Pilot Project in Fundamental Education, Nicaragua, by Max H. Miñano García	78
The Teacher's Function in Community Work, Bolivia, by Victor Montoya Medinacely	85
Social Education in India, by Sohan Singh	89
Retrospect	97
Unesco Associated Youth Enterprises—I: A Quaker International Work Camp in Kenya	98
Notes and Records	101
Contributors to this issue	103

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FUNDAMENTAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

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EDITORIAL

THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF FUNDAMENTAL EDUCATION

It is now a little more than ten years since the concept of fundamental education came into existence at the first session of the General Conference of Unesco.

It has been a decade of intensive national efforts to improve social and economic conditions in underdeveloped rural areas. Wide areas and vast populations have been affected by these activities—for example, by modern health services, new industries, the provision of hydro-electric power, irrigation and mechanized agriculture. Yet more than half of the world's people still continue to live out an unrelenting struggle for existence, largely ignorant of the material improvements that modern knowledge could bring them, while, on the other hand whole populations exist in that state of inertia and disintegration which is all too often associated with the breakdown of tribal or village culture under the impact of economic and social change.

Within the last five years, a new movement has been gathering impetus to meet this situation—a movement at least in part based on the partnership of people and government—a movement called 'Community Development'.

It is within this progressive pattern that fundamental education must take its place, not as a self-sufficient programme of adult literacy teaching and informal education, but as one of a range of integrated services, contributing to the common purpose of social and economic progress.

Fittingly enough, the year 1956—the tenth year of Unesco's life—has been a year devoted to an intensive review of the concept of fundamental education. This review was really the climax of a continuous effort on the part of Unesco and its Member States to clarify the meaning of the term and to work out and improve the processes to which it is applied.

The operation has entailed a constant interaction of thinking and practice. Its purpose has been to define the relationship of fundamental education, both with other forms of education, formal and informal, and with other technical services in the broader field of social and economic development.

In this number of the bulletin we try to give our readers some results of this review. In order to maintain the interaction of thinking and practice, we devote the first part of our number to a study of various documents produced at desks and around conference tables in Paris and Geneva, and by the General Conference of Unesco at New Delhi, and the second part to a number of articles especially written by people working in the field or reporting field experience at first hand.